Bengaluru Tuesday, April 7, 2026 Pages 16 Vol 79 No 96 ₹7

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DH

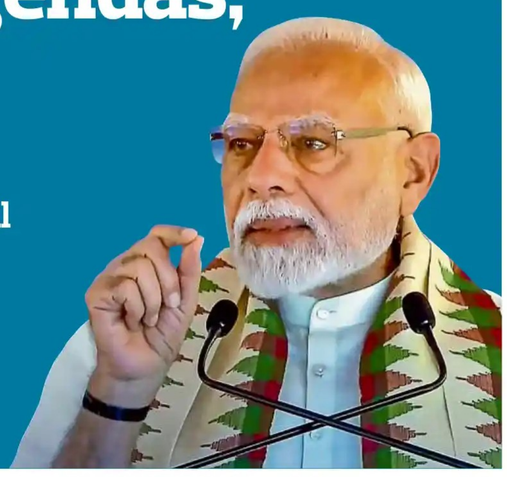
DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Work underway on key BJP agendas, says PM

Modi says positive progress on Uniform Civil Code, 'One Nation, One Election'

Page 10



World

Artemis II breaks record, humans travel farther from Earth than ever before

P.12

Nation

SC orders probe into Arunachal CM family's contracts

P.10

Nation

Oppn notices seeking CEC's removal rejected P.10

Metro

Towing back in Bengaluru after 4 years P.2

Iran rejects truce plan as Trump deadline nears

WAR RAGES: Entire country can be taken in 1 night: US Prez

TEHRAN, AP

Iran on Monday rejected a 45-day ceasefire proposal and said it wants a permanent end to the war, while President Donald Trump appeared to widen his threat from civilian targets to the whole Islamic Republic while his ultimatum ticked closer.

"The entire country can be taken out in one night, and that night might be tomorrow night," Trump told a news conference at the White House. He has called his Tuesday 8 pm deadline for Iran to make a deal final. Trump said US will destroy all Iran bridges, power plants in 'four hours' if no deal is done.

The US stepped up threats against Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz or face a barrage of attacks on civilian targets. "Today will be the largest volume of strikes since day one," Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said. "Tomorrow, even more than today."

Israel piled on pressure by attacking a major gas field that is Iran's biggest source of domestic energy.

Tehran conveyed its 10-point response through Pakistan, a key mediator, including proposals on reconstruction and the lifting of sanctions, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency said.

"We only accept an end of the war with guarantees that we won't be attacked again," Mojtaba Ferdousi Pour, head of Iran's diplomatic mission in Cairo, told The Associated Press. He said Iran no longer trusts the Trump administration after the US bombed the Islamic Republic twice during previous rounds of talks.

And yet a regional official involved in talks said efforts had not collapsed. "We are still talking to both sides," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door diplomacy.

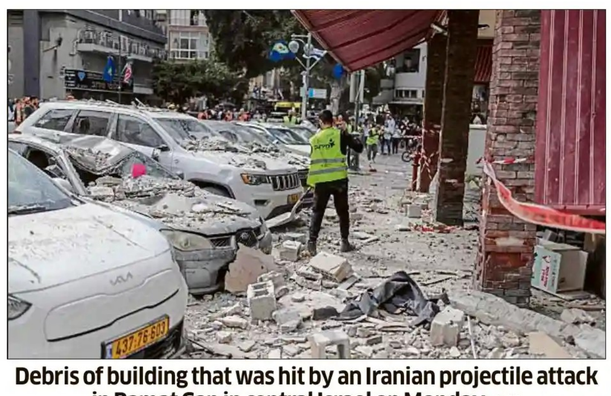
Iranian and Omani officials were working on a mechanism for administrating the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped in peacetime. Iran's grip on it has shaken the world economy. Tehran has refused to let US and Israeli vessels through after they started the war on February 28.

Israel struck a key petrochemical plant in the South Pars natural gas field and killed two paramilitary Revolutionary Guard commanders, including its intelligence chief.

The gas field attack aimed at eliminating a major source of revenue for Iran, Israel said. The field, the world's largest, is shared with Qatar. It is critical to electricity production for Iran's 93 million population, but the strike appeared to be separate from Trump's threats.

Earlier in the day the White House confirmed there was a deal under consideration for a 45-day ceasefire, but Trump had "not signed off" on the proposal and is continuing the war.

"POTUS (Trump) has not signed off on it," a White House official said.



Debris of building that was hit by an Iranian projectile attack in Ramat Gan in central Israel on Monday. AFP

On the battlefield

- Iran will continue war for "as long as political authorities see fit", says Iran army spokesman
- IAEA chief says attacks near Iran's Bushehr atomic power plant pose a very real danger
- Israeli strike kills Iran Revolutionary Guards intelligence chief Major Gen Majid Khademi
- Iranian attack on a residential area in northern Kuwait wounds 6 people
- Oil prices fluctuate with North Sea Brent at $109 a barrel

"You know the war crime? The war crime is allowing Iran to have a nuclear weapon."

- DONALD TRUMP
US President

Auto LPG supply drying up in B'luru

The LPG crisis in Bengaluru continues to worsen with many private LPG auto gas pumps witnessing a long line of autorickshaws, with waiting stretching beyond six hours. Many autorickshaw drivers say they cannot switch to petrol as not many vehicles are compatible with both fuels. Page 3

Israel hits Iran helicopters, aircraft

The Israeli military said Monday it carried out strikes on three airports in Tehran, targeting Iranian planes and helicopters. Israeli jets struck aircraft and military infrastructure. Israel said the strikes were part of efforts aimed at "degrading the Iranian Air Force and IRGC air force.

Security scare at Delhi Assembly as car breaches gate, 3 held

NEW DELHI, DHNS: In a major security breach, a masked man drove an SUV into Delhi Assembly premises on Monday afternoon and escaped after placing a bouquet outside the Speaker's office. However, he was nabbed within hours, police said.

The police later detained two others and also seized the vehicle.

The SUV entered the premises by forcing its way through one of the gates, where the security was less.

The driver was identified as Sarabjit, a resident of Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh.

Police sounded a high alert following the incident, even as investigators and bomb disposal squads conducted intensive searches in the Assembly premises and adjoining areas.

▸ Security scare, Page 6

SC directs NIA to probe judges' gherao during Bengal SIR

Says allegations warrant probe by central agency

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the National Investigation Agency to take over the investigations into incidents involving the 'gherao' of judicial officers in a village in West Bengal's Malda district during Special Intensive Revision (SIR) duty on April 1.

"There are serious allegations against the members of the state/local police. In exercise of powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, we direct that the investigation of these FIRs be taken over by NIA, irrespective of the offences under which these FIRs have been registered," a bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said.

The court said the allegations warranted an independent probe by a central agency.

The court directed the NIA to take over the investigation of 12 FIRs registered by the police, irrespective of the provisions under which the FIRs have been registered.

The bench clarified that regardless of whether the scheduled offences under the NIA Act are attracted or not, the central agency can investigate these matters.

▸ SIR, Page 4

What the SC said

The SC bench observed that the incident appeared "pre-planned and motivated"

- Raps Chief Secretary for failing to answer calls from the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court while the judicial officers were under siege
- Expresses grave concern over the politicisation of the state administration and the conduct of top officials

"The investigation reports have to be filed before the NIA court at Kolkata. Until then, the NIA is directed to continue submitting status reports to the Supreme Court from time to time

- SUPREME COURT

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN
SAAT-2026

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Electrical Engineering
Mechanical Engineering

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Computer Science and Information Technology

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National Institutional Ranking Framework 2025
15th in University Category
22nd in Engineering Category
15th in Medical Category
09th in Dental Category
10th in Law Category

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STATE JOLT

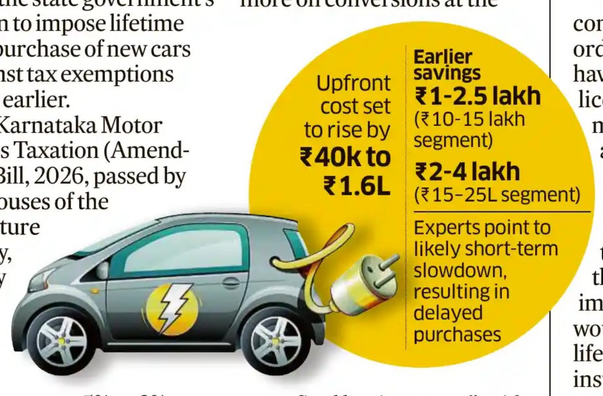
Buyers may spurn EVs due to lifetime tax: Experts

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE
BENGALURU, DHNS

A rude shock awaits electric car buyers in Karnataka with the prices of the vehicles set to increase by Rs 40,000-1.6 lakh, depending on the model, following the state government's decision to impose lifetime tax on purchase of new cars as against tax exemptions offered earlier.

The Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, passed by both Houses of the Legislature recently, will levy a lifetime tax ranging from 5% to 8% on new electric cars that were hitherto exempted. Cars priced up to Rs 10 lakh will pay 5%, while those costing between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 25 lakh will have to fork out 8%. Electric cars priced beyond Rs 25 lakh already carry a 10% road tax.

"Karnataka, with around 22,950 e-PV registrations in FY26 (about 12% share), is the second-largest EV market after Maharashtra, making the proposed levy significant. The tax will increase upfront costs by around Rs 40,000-1.6 lakh, which can slow purchase decisions and increase comparison with ICE and hybrids, and the impact is less on interest and more on conversions at the final buying stage," said Poonam Upadhyay, Director — Crisil Ratings.


Upfront cost set to rise by ₹40k to ₹1.6L
Earlier savings
₹1-2.5 lakh
(₹10-15 lakh segment)
₹2-4 lakh
(₹15-25L segment)
Experts point to likely short-term slowdown, resulting in delayed purchases

She added that the earlier tax exemption translated into a clear upfront saving for EV buyers. Since ICE vehicles attract 8-20% road tax, electric car buyers were effectively saving Rs 1-2.5 lakh in the Rs 10-15 lakh segment and Rs 2-4 lakh in the Rs 15-25 lakh segment.

▸ EV buyers, Page 4

9 TN cops get death penalty in custodial death case

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

In a landmark verdict, a Madurai court on Monday awarded death sentence to all nine police personnel convicted in the custodial death of a father-son duo in Thoothukudi district in 2020.

"If ordinary citizens had committed the same crime, ordinary punishment could have been given, but the police themselves have committed the crime," first additional district and sessions Judge Muthukumaran said in his order.

While pronouncing the verdict, the judge said that he is of the opinion that imposing the death penalty would be the best option, as life imprisonment would not instil fear in the police officers.

The sentencing comes two weeks after the judge convicted the policemen.

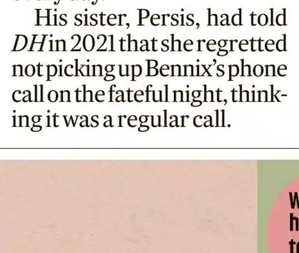
The custodial death of 60-year-old P Jeyaraj and his son Bennix (31), who ran a retail mobile store in Sathankulam town in Thoothukudi district, had sent shockwaves across the country for the brutality of the crime.

They were beaten up by 10 policemen at the Sathankulam police station through the night of June 19, 2020. While the son died on June 22, Jeyaraj succumbed to his injuries the following day.

CBI had sought maximum punishment for all the accused.

Ten policemen were arrested, but one of them died during the Covid-19 pandemic. Jeyaraj and Bennix were arrested by the Sathankulam police on June 19, 2020, for allegedly keeping their mobile shop open beyond permitted hours during the lockdown, a claim later found to be false. Bennix was a doting brother to his sisters and had a habit of talking to their children every day.

His sister, Persis, had told *DH* in 2021 that she regretted not picking up Bennix's phone call on the fateful night, thinking it was a regular call.



Police escort the accused outside a court premises in Madurai on Monday. PTI

CBC 22201/13/0003/2627

Committed to
Nari Shakti Vandan

We now have access to clean water
Tap water in 15.8+ crore homes

We now have a permanent home
4+ crore homes with majority owned by women

We now have dignity
Government of Bharat
12.1+ crore toilets built

Hosur Road: PRR trumpet plan stalls vehicle overpass project

NHAI pauses work, backfills excavated stretch after Biocon chief slams 'eyesore'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Black spots on Hosur Road
Four vehicle overpasses to eliminate black spots on Hosur Road (NH 44): Veerasandra (Huskur and Biocon), Chandapura and Guestline Circle at Balagaranahalli.

Total length	No of lane	Cost
4.5 km	3+3	Rs 112 cr

Deadline: May 2027

> It (Hosur Road) is an eyesore. The medians and barricades are terrible, and the shoulders are not asphalted. Despite several complaints, there has been no response. Is this what NHAI considers its proud track record.
> **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (on X)**

The wait for a vehicle overpass at Veerasandra on Hosur Road (NH 44), aimed at easing congestion and eliminating accident-prone black spots, has just got longer.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) had begun work on a rainwater drainage culvert as part of the vehicle overpass project near the offices of biopharmaceutical company Biocon Limited at Veerasandra in southern Bengaluru.

However, after excavation began for a retaining wall, the state government asked the NHAI to halt the project, stating that it planned to build a trumpet at the same location for the proposed Peripheral Ring Road (PRR).

Well-placed sources said that after the work was paused, sewage water from a sub-drain linked to the main drain choked, creating a foul smell near the Biocon premises.

The NHAI began work on a rainwater drainage culvert as part of the vehicle overpass near Biocon office at Veerasandra.

In a strongly worded post on X on Sunday, Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw criticised the NHAI, calling the national highway "shoddily designed and ill maintained".

"It's an eyesore. The medians and barricades are terrible, and the shoulders are not asphalted. Despite several complaints over several years, there has been no response. Is this what NHAI considers its proud track record," she wrote, tagging Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari.

Following the post, NHAI officials visited the spot to address the issue.

"Our contractor carried out excavation along a 100-metre stretch between the main carriageway and the service road to build the retaining wall eight metres deep, but work was halted after the state government raised objections in writing. We have been asked to wait. Traffic police also denied permission for road closure," a senior NHAI official with knowledge of the matter said.

As a temporary measure, the NHAI has backfilled the excavated stretch and asked the contractor to restore drains and median crash barriers, besides asphalting damaged stretches.

The NHAI official clarified that the main drain is meant for rainwater water, while the stench originated from the sewage-carrying sub-drain connected to a septic tank.

The NHAI will build the vehicle overpass only if the state government gives the go-ahead and the traffic police allow road closure. "Our hands are tied," the official said.

Meanwhile, the NHAI is constructing vehicle overpasses at three other locations on Hosur Road at a cost of Rs 112 crore. These are Veerasandra (Huskur), Chandapura and Guestline Circle at Balagaranahalli.

"These will be 3+3 lane service roads to eliminate black spots. The total length of the four vehicle overpasses will be 4.5 km. We plan to complete them by May 2027," the official stated.

'Bengaluru traffic will teach you patience': HC to techie in road rage case

Petitioner withdraws plea after court declines to intervene at investigation stage

BENGALURU, DHNS

JUSTICE NAGAPRASANNA

> If you have no patience, then there is nothing to do. Bengaluru traffic will teach you patience. No road rage will be pardoned.

A software engineer withdrew his petition after the Karnataka High Court said road-rage incidents will not be pardoned.

"If you have no patience, then there is nothing to do. Bengaluru traffic will teach you patience. No road rage will be pardoned," Justice M Nagaprasanna said.

The incident was reported on October 26, 2025, near the MS Ramaiah Hospital signal when a car hit a scooter. A couple and their child riding the scooter fell on to the road.

The complaint stated that the accident happened due to road rage.

The petition challenged the crime registered for rash driving and acts endangering life or personal safety, along with provisions under the Motor Vehicles Act for failing to assist the injured and report the incident.

After the case was transferred from the traffic police to the Sadashivanagar police, BNS Section 109 (1) was added for attempted murder.

The advocate for the petitioner said there was no motive or intention and that the attempted murder case had been registered without any supporting statement.

The court said a road-rage incident itself can trigger serious offences and indicated it was not inclined to intervene at this stage, especially when the investigation is underway.

IN THE HIGH COURT

The court also said the petitioner can approach it after the filing of the charge sheet. At this stage, the advocate for the petitioner submitted that he would withdraw the petition with the liberty to approach the court after filing the charge sheet.

Water bill arrears snapshot
- Total connections: **11 lakh**
- Consumers with dues: **5.11 lakh**
- Total arrears: **Rs 851.33 cr**
- Principal: **Rs 539.43 crore**
- Interest: **Rs 311.90 crore**

BWSSB to send OTS notices with April water bills

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is preparing to roll out the One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme for consumers with pending dues.

Consumers eligible under the scheme will receive notices with detailed payment information along with their water bills this month.

"All preparations for the successful implementation of the scheme have been completed. Consumers eligible for the OTS scheme will be provided with comprehensive information alongside this month's water bill. A separate letter detailing the outstanding principal, the exact interest amount being waived, final payable sum, payment methods, and the scheme's criteria will be attached to the bill," said Ramprasat Manohar V, Chairman, BWSSB.

The state recently announced the scheme to recover pending dues from defaulters. Under the scheme, BWSSB will waive interest on pending water bills if defaulters pay the full principal during the scheme period.

Vehicle towing resumes in city, rolled out in Central & North zones

BENGALURU, DHNS

FINES & CHARGES
- **Cars:** Rs 1,000 towing charge
- **Two-wheelers:** Rs 650 towing charge (These are in addition to separate parking violation fines)
- Vehicles parked in non-designated areas, especially on major roads and white-topped roads, will be towed.
- Authorities say this will be a continuous drive, not a one-time crackdown.

Vehicle towing has officially resumed in Bengaluru after a gap of more than four years, with authorities launching a renewed crackdown on illegal parking across key parts of the city.

Beginning April 5, the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP), in coordination with the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), started towing vehicles parked in non-designated areas to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

In the initial phase, the drive is being implemented in the Bengaluru Central and North City Corporation limits.

From Tuesday onwards, vehicles parked illegally — especially on white-topped roads and other major stretches — will be towed away. The civic bodies have handed over towing vehicles to the traffic police to facilitate the enforcement, while the remaining city corporations are in the process of procuring similar equipment to expand the drive citywide.

Officials have made it clear that the towing operation will be continuous, with a focus on maintaining orderly traffic conditions.

Motorists found violating parking norms will face towing charges of Rs 1,000 for cars and Rs 650 for two-wheelers, in addition to fines imposed for unauthorised parking.

The move marks the return of a system that had been suspended in February 2022 following widespread public complaints about misconduct by towing staff and allegations of bribery involving traffic personnel.

With its reintroduction, authorities say they aim to enforce rules more strictly while ensuring smoother and safer roads.

The decision was also part of a broader review of civic and infrastructure issues during a coordination meeting led by GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao.

Concerns such as poor road conditions were discussed, with instructions issued to procure pothole-filling machines for each city corporation to enable faster repairs. Additionally, officials were directed to expedite approvals for road-cutting requests submitted by GAIL Gas through its internal MARCS software.

With towing now back in force and set to expand across more areas, the traffic police have urged citizens to follow parking regulations closely to avoid penalties and inconvenience.

Bangalore Development Authority Commissioner Manivannan P, and Corporation Commissioners Rajendra Cholan (Central), Pommala Sunil Kumar (North), Ramesh DS (East), and Dr Rajendra KV (West) were prsent.

Tempo driver assaulted near Attibele toll; six arrested

BENGALURU, DHNS: A tempo traveller driver from the city was allegedly assaulted by a group near the Attibele toll plaza on the Karnataka–Tamil Nadu border after a dispute in Krishnagiri.

A senior police officer said the incident took place on Sunday evening.

The driver, Ramakrishna alias Ramu, had taken seven passengers from Whitefield to the Muneshwara temple in Krishnagiri.

Scuffle in temple

While returning, a quarrel reportedly broke out between the passengers and some locals at the temple over a trivial issue, which escalated into a scuffle.

The group then left and proceeded towards Bengaluru. They were allegedly chased by the same group near Attibele. The gang intercepted the vehicle, damaged its windshield using rods, stones and sticks, and assaulted the driver.

The incident was captured on the vehicle's dash camera and went viral on social media.

Based on a complaint, Attibele police registered a case and detained six accused for further investigation.

Preliminary investigations showed all the accused were under the influence of alcohol when the attack took place, the officer added.

Woman leaves door open at night; thieves steal gold, phones

BENGALURU, DHNS: A woman's decision to leave her door open at night to beat the summer heat proved costly after unidentified men entered her house and stole gold jewellery and mobile phones while she was fast asleep.

The incident took place in the Ashok Nagar police station limits in the wee hours on Saturday.

A senior police officer said the complainant, Shailaja, was unwell and had fallen into deep sleep after leaving the main door open for ventilation. She had kept her 18-gram mangalsutra and two mobile phones beside her.

The thieves entered the house through the open door and escaped with valuables worth Rs 1.5 lakh.

The theft came to light around 6 am when her family woke up and found the items missing. She approached the Ashok Nagar police and filed a case.

Alleging police apathy, Shailaja, a resident of Anepalya, told *DH*: "The officers failed to act promptly when I first reported the incident and made me wait an entire day before registering an FIR."

She said CCTV footage from the vicinity showed a barefoot man moving around the locality around 2.25 am, trying to push open the doors of multiple houses.

"As our main door was kept open, he entered the house and committed the theft," she said.

Shailaja added that she had been working as a team leader at a skincare company, but had recently quit her job due to health issues.

Five arrested for assaulting woman over 'immoral activity'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Varthur police on Monday arrested five people, including three women, for allegedly assaulting a 20-year-old woman on suspicion of her involvement in immoral activities.

A senior police officer said the prime accused are still absconding. Based on a complaint filed by the victim, a resident of West Bengal, a case was registered on Saturday.

According to the complaint, the accused barged into her home, suspecting she was with a man, and shouted, "Have you come to our area to engage in prostitution?" before dragging her out and assaulting her with wooden logs.

The woman stated that she had been staying in a labour shed and that some youths in the neighborhood had been following her while she went to work.

Despite warning them to stay away, the group allegedly gathered near her home on Friday around 10.30 pm.

The accused reportedly confronted her, assaulted her, and issued threats, police said.

Summer special trains

BENGALURU, DHNS: The South Western Railway (SWR) has extended the following summer special trains connecting Bengaluru with Kalaburagi and Bidar:

Train 06207 Bengaluru Cantonment–Kalaburagi Weekly Express Special, operating on Saturdays, will run from April 11 to 25.

In the return direction, train 06208 Kalaburagi–Bengaluru Cantonment Weekly Express Special, operating on Sundays, will run from April 12 to 26.

Train 06539 SMVT Bengaluru–Bidar Bi-weekly Express Special, operating on Fridays and Sundays, will run from April 10 to 26.

Truck driver gets 60 days jail in fatal crash case

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 36-year-old truck driver has been convicted for a road accident that killed a pedestrian in northern Bengaluru nearly three years ago.

A city court found the accused, Ramesh HT, guilty of fatally knocking down 44-year-old Channegowda in the Yeshwantpur traffic police station limits on June 12, 2023. It sentenced him to 60 days' imprisonment and fined Rs 8,000.

Police registered a case of causing death by negligence and launched an investigation.

After a detailed probe, police filed a charge sheet against Ramesh.

The court took cognisance of the case and conducted trial proceedings.

During the trial, Senior Public Prosecutor B Chandrakala and her team argued that the accused was responsible for the accident.

The court found the charges valid and held the accused guilty.

Citizens petition GSI for Lalbagh UNESCO heritage tag

BENGALURU, DHNS

A group of citizens has decided to meet senior officials of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to share their concerns over the proposed North-South tunnel road project that will cut through the Lalbagh botanical garden.

The meeting gains significance as the GSI has also commissioned an inquiry to assess the geological implications of the project on the geo-heritage site.

Vijay Vishnupant Mughal, Additional Director General and Head of Department, GSI (Southern Region), Bengaluru, is expected to meet the citizens on Thursday.

During the meeting, citizens plan to petition GSI officials to pursue the recognition of Lalbagh, a 240-acre botanical garden, as a UNESCO world heritage site.

6 gems in Karnataka

In Karnataka, GSI has recognised six places, including Yana Rock cave in Uttara Kannada and Columnar Basaltic Lava of St Mary's Island in Udupi, as geo-heritage sites. Lalbagh is one among them.

The peninsular gneiss at Lalbagh is one of India's oldest rock formations, dating back to over 3,000 million years.

These gneisses were formed during the Archaean times and are mainly composed of Tonalite-Trondhjemite-Granodiorite (TTG), representing a landmark in the geological evolution of the Indian sub-continent. While the Horticulture Department is responsible for the upkeep of the garden, the GSI is also the custodian of the geo-heritage site.

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) regional office in Kumaraswamy Layout.
DH PHOTO/NAVEEN MENEZES

The GSI was not consulted before the detailed project report (DPR) of the 17.5-km tunnel road was finalised. The tunnel connects Hebbal in the north to Central Silk Board in the south.

The DPR requires about six acres of Lalbagh on a temporary basis and one acre permanently.

Last week, Bangalore South MP LS Tejasvi Surya met Union Minister for Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy to apprise him of citizens' concerns over the tunnel road project.

GSI subsequently constituted an expert committee to conduct a study and submit its report in three weeks.

HERITAGE VERSUS NOVELTY

Kempegowda tower colours the logos of GBA, city corporations

BENGALURU, DHNS

The GBA bears Nadaprabhu Kempegowda with the iconic Kempegowda tower, while each corporation carries the tower in its own distinct colour.

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has picked logos designed by Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath for its official purposes and for the five newly carved city corporations.

Both the GBA and the corporations have already started using these logos on their official websites and social media platforms.

The Chitrakala Parishath, which runs the College of Fine Arts and Bangalore School of Visual Arts, shared a large number of options with the GBA. The final logos received formal approval at a meeting headed by Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar, sources said.

The GBA logo features Nadaprabhu Kempegowda along with the iconic Kempegowda tower in the background. The logos of the five city corporations retain only the tower, each carrying a different colour in the background.

The choice suggests that officials have opted to continue with the logo of the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in a different colour rather than introduce an entirely new design.

On X, the choice drew attention after a user posted logo designs his team had worked on as part of a competition. The user claimed his submission made it to the top five, but the GBA picked the Chitrakala Parishath designs for their historical significance.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Karnataka State Government Employees' Association: International Women's Day; Shalini Rajneesh, Dr Nagalakshmi Choudhary, Uma Mahadevan, Saptami Gowda; Association premises, Cubbon Park; 10 am.

Karnataka Sanskrit University: 12th and 13th Convocation; Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Dr MC Sudhakar, S Ahalya, Dr CN Manjunath; Dr Manmohan Singh Bangalore City University, Central College Campus; 11.30 am.

Jyoti Nivas College: Prize distribution ceremony; Presided over by Sr Mary Louisa; Nataraj Talaghattapura; Koramangala; 12.30 pm.

Rashtriya Basavatatva Parishad: Sharan Sangama 'Basavatatva Then and Now' lecture; Presented by Mallikarjuna Devar; Dr M Chidanandamurthy Hall, Corporation Building, Vijayanagar; 4.30 pm.

CULTURAL

Udayabhanu Kalasangha: Kannada Drama Festival-2026; Kempegowdanagar; 6.30 pm.

Rangbhoomi Udupi: Play 'Shivoham'; Rangashankara, JP Nagar; 7.30 pm.

RELIGIOUS

Sri Ramaseva Board Ramanavami Celebration Trust: 88th Sri Rama Navami Music Festival; Special Carnatic Classical Concert; Kote High School Campus, Chamarajpet; from 4.30 pm.

Srivani Kala Kendra: 33rd Sri Rama Navami Music Festival; Basaveshwaranagar; 6.30 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	35.0°C
Minimum	23.0°C
Rainfall	--
Humidity	64%
Sunset (Apr 7)	6:32 pm
Sunrise (Apr 8)	6:13 am
Moonrise	10:10 pm
Moonset	08:51 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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Meeting on Friday to address auto LPG shortage

BENGALURU, DHNS: Amid auto LPG shortage across the state, Food and Civil Supplies Minister K H Muniyappa on Monday said he would hold a meeting on April 10 (Friday) to resolve the crisis.

Representatives of private oil companies, union government officials, Indian Oil Corporation coordinators, police and senior state government officials would take part in the meeting, he added.

After hearing the grievances of the auto drivers' associations, Muniyappa admitted that they are in distress.

"Around 3,000 auto LPG cylinders are being supplied by the central government daily. But the private suppliers have increased the price. This is causing inconvenience to auto drivers," Muniyappa said.

"The energy or fuel crisis is there across the world. If the Centre had planned to get the energy supplies from Russia a month in advance, this situation would not have arisen," he said.

Gas shortage: Rescue centres unable to feed animals

Find both electrical stoves, firewood unviable

While cattle can be fed raw food, dogs and cats need food that is cooked well.

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The LPG crisis owing to the conflict in West Asia has affected animals also.

Many animal rescue centres are finding it difficult to provide food to dogs and other animals as they are unable to procure commercial LPG cylinders.

"We need at least one commercial cylinder every two or three days since we cook rice and meat for over 170 dogs. Now, it has become difficult to get a cylinder and the prices in the market outside have gone up to Rs 8,000 making it too expensive for us to cook and sustain," said Praveen Kumar L, founder President of the We Save Animals (WSA) Welfare Trust.

Following the crisis, many of them have tried to switch to firewood cooking. However, even that has proven to be expensive since the demand for wood has gone up over the last two weeks.

A few centres have also experimented using electric stoves but the costs are a concern, those running the centres said. "Unlike gas stoves, we will have to cook for longer since we cook on a large scale. Also, to meet the needs, we will have to cook multiple times. This increases the power consumption drastically. In fact, power consumption has gone up by nearly three times and this is expensive," said Samyukta Hornad, founder of the Praana Animal Foundation.

While cattle can be fed raw food, dogs and cats need food that is cooked well. "Both rice and meat have to be cooked. Though we can feed biscuits sometimes, it is not good for their digestive system," Kumar said.

Stray dogs at risk

Many activists and volunteers working on the ground also observed that the stray dogs were also finding it difficult to get food since many small roadside eateries which were throwing away excess food to dogs have now shut down. "Small roadside shops and eateries were the main source of food for many strays. Now that many have closed, the dogs are finding it difficult to get food," said Mohit K, a volunteer with many animal welfare NGOs.

Kumar also noted that only a few dogs were able to get food and their organisation was trying to feed the others. "If there are about 50 dogs in a locality, only 20 of them are able to get food now. Hence, we try to go around and feed dogs at least once a day," he said.

The summer heat has added to the problems as many dogs find it difficult to get water. These conditions together have caused problems for many stray dogs, volunteers observed.

Auto drivers wait for over 6 hrs at refill stations

Say switching to petrol is not an option

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The LPG crisis in the city continues to snowball, with more private LPG auto gas bunks witnessing long lines of autorickshaws, some waiting beyond six hours.

While oil majors are advising autorickshaw drivers to switch to petrol, the latter say that not many of their vehicles are compatible with both LPG and petrol. Poor mileage and harm to the engine are drivers' other concerns.

Govindraju K, an auto driver waiting at an Indian Oil station, told *DH*, "Petrol is expensive, and it gives us very little mileage compared to LPG. It impacts the engine of the vehicle. Hence, we are hesitant to switch to petrol."

Satya Kumar, another autorickshaw driver, said, "I am told that my engine is designed for LPG. If something happens to my auto while using petrol, who will bear that cost?."

D Rudramurthy, general secretary, Auto Rickshaw Drivers' Union, told *DH* that switching to petrol is not an option. "The engine bore gets damaged, and the mileage will come down to around 10 km per litre."

The management of a gas station on Mysuru Road said that they were expecting a supply on Monday night, but were unsure about the price.

Prakash Kumar, the owner of the station, said, "We are expecting about four tonnes of LPG supply to arrive tonight. We are yet to determine the price, but it will be for sure priced above Rs 140. We haven't received a single load in almost a week."

The owner of another bunk near Uttarahalli, wishing to remain anonymous, said, "Auto LPG is not available even in the black market. We are worried about keeping the bunk running. If we do not have business, how do we pay our workers and sustain ourselves?"

Krishna K, an autorickshaw driver from Kumbalgodu, said, "In search of LPG, I had to drive for 30 km from my house. I parked my auto in the line to not lose my spot. I went home at 10 pm by bus and came back at 5 am, leaving my auto in the queue."

Many auto drivers in the snaking queues at auto LPG bunks across the city said they were resorting to selling jewellery to pay rent to their owners for the autos.

Autorickshaw driver Praveen Gowda, said, "If we don't pay rent even for a day, the owners harass us. If we don't have fuel, we are stuck. Our situation is getting worse, just like the Covid time".

Kannada Chaluvali Vatal Paksha leader Vatal Nagaraj, with supporters, protests against LPG shortage, in Bengaluru, on Monday. PTI PHOTO

Two forest guards killed in accident

HOSAPETE (VIJAYANAGAR DISTRICT), DHNS: Two forest guards working on contract basis died on the spot after a goods vehicle hit the bike they were riding near Venkatapura in Hosapete taluk on Sunday night.

The deceased have been identified as Krishna (25) and Hanumanthappa (50). They were heading to Ramasagara anti-poaching camp for duty when a goods vehicle transporting rice bags hit their bike. Both died on the spot, police said.

The family members of the deceased staged a protest near the mortuary demanding permanent job for their kin. They agreed to shift the bodies after deputy conservator of forests promised contractual employment for the kin of the deceased.

Revert to petrol, Pralhad Joshi tells auto drivers

Cong govt only aggravated a similar crisis in the past, says Union Minister

DAVANAGERE, DHNS

Acknowledging the crisis triggered by the shortage of auto LPG in the country, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday called on autodrivers to revert to petrol, remarking that the country would never be faced with a shortage of petrol.

Interacting with reporters in Davanagere, Joshi pointed out that LPG was available in only a few countries the world over. "Of the 372 LPG distribution centres across Karnataka, the government operates only 72. Compelled by the rise in costs on the international market, it is the private distributors who have increased the cost of LPG in India to Rs 1,110/kg. But the Centre has not raised the price of auto LPG, which is still being sold for Rs 89/kg at government-run centres. India can meet 60% of the demand for LPG domestically, and relies on imports for the remaining 40%," said Joshi.

Pointing to the 70% increase in the supply of commercial cylinders, the Union Minister opined that there was no need to politicise the issue. "Look how the Congress-led UPA government handled a similar crisis in the past. You can look up the statement of then Oil Minister Veerappa Moily online. Despite availability of fuel, then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh effected a drastic hike in the price. The Congress-led government only aggravated the crisis," Joshi added.

The country has stocked enough crude oil for the next 70 days, said Joshi. "There is no need to worry; uninterrupted supply of oil has been assured," he said.

Responding to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's claims of the delimitation exercise weakening the standing of southern states, Joshi said, "The Congress leader must know that the southern states accounted for only 24% of the seats in the Lok Sabha in the past as well, and the proportion of seats of northern states was higher. The Congress, which has ruled this country for 60 years, is trying to drive a wedge between the north and the south."

Joshi observed that certain Lok Sabha seats in the northern states boasted as many as 40 to 50 lakh voters. Delimitation will result in a proportional increase in the number of seats, said Joshi. "Congress is afraid it will not be able to win even a single seat in the north. I condemn the Congress's bid to divide the country. The last time a major delimitation exercise was carried out was in 2008 when Dr Singh was PM. So, the Congress must blame its own leaders," said the Union Minister.

Former Union Minister G M Siddeshwara, among others, was present alongside Joshi at the media interaction.

Bengaluru techie drowns in Balehonnur

BALEHONNUR (CHIKKAMAGALURU DIST), DHNS: A 27-year-old software engineer working in Bengaluru drowned in Bhadra river near Balehonnur on Sunday. The deceased is Abhishek, hailing from Gadag.

Abhishek, with eight friends, arrived here for a friend's wedding and they were all staying in a homestay. They were watching sunset sitting on a rock. Abhishek attempted to venture into the river for a swim, when he lost balance and fell into the water.

Police, fire and emergency service personnel, Tangavelu from Holebagilu and Chandrashekar Rai from Khandya, undertook search operations. The body was retrieved on Monday.

Bomb threat emails warn of 13 IEDs at DRDO unit, turns hoax

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bomb threat emails sent to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) offices here on Monday turned out to be a hoax after police conducted a thorough search.

The emails targeted the Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE), claiming that 13 cyanide gas-based improvised explosive devices (IEDs) had been planted on the premises and warned of explosions at 1.10 pm.

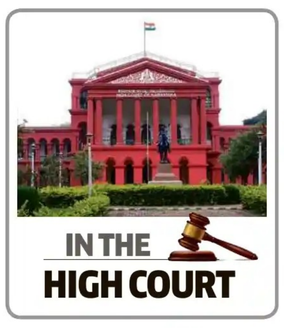
The emails, reportedly written in Tamil, also contained a threat to kidnap party leaders of Tamil Nadu.

"Baiyyappanahalli police along with bomb disposal squad rushed to the spot and conducted a search. The threat turned out to be a hoax," a police officer said.

DRDO officials received the email around 12 pm and alerted authorities. A case has been registered based on a complaint, and further investigation is on.

Harassment of Korean woman: HC bins BIAL staffer's plea

'He took her to gents' toilet, touched her everywhere'



BENGALURU, DHNS

The high court on Monday refused to quash proceedings against an official of Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), for sexually harassing a Korean woman passenger at the Kempegowda International Airport.

"What sort of an officer you are. Should you be spared?" Justice M Nagaprasanna orally remarked, while dismissing the petition filed by Mohammed Affan Ahmed, a ground staff at the Bangalore International Airport Limited.

The petitioner challenged the FIR which was registered by the BIAL police for the offence under section 75 (1) (i) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

As the matter was mentioned, the court remarked orally, "At the immigration, you took a South Korean lady, made her stand in 'T-position' and touched everywhere. Tell me, should you be spared?" the court said.

Justice Nagaprasanna further observed orally, "She (Korean woman) has described what all you did. First of all, why did you take her to a gent's toilet? Justification is that somebody was there at the ladies' toilet. You take her to the gents' toilet, make her stand in 'T-position' and touched everywhere. What sort of an officer are you?"

The incident had happened at Terminal-2 of the Kempegowda International Airport when the woman, who was heading to South Korea, was cleared at both the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) as well as at the immigration screenings.

'Beep sound in bag'

The petitioner had approached the woman raising an issue about a beeping sound from her bag and persuaded her to move to a secluded place near the men's restroom. The petitioner inappropriately touched the woman under the guise of manual frisk and hugged her.

Passenger's plaint

The airport security staff detained the petitioner based on the complaint filed by the woman passenger and handed him over to the BIAL police. The BIAL police registered a crime and arrested him.

No maps or direction boards on trails, complain trekkers

'No emergency response facilties even with entry fees'

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS:

The recent case of Sharanya G S, a techie from Kerala, going missing while trekking at Tadiandamol in Kodagu district has raised questions about safety of trekkers in the state.

In 2024, the Karnataka government introduced an entry fee for trekking trails.

The fee varies from Rs 350 to Rs 600, based on the trail. The government made it compulsory to hire a guide and restricted trekking timings between 6 am and 6 pm.

Many trek organizers told *DH* that despite paying entry fee, facilities for trekkers aren't adequate.

Chandrashekar Madivalar, a prominent trek organiser in the city, said, "There are no direction signs or emergency response facilities. Maps or direction boards will help people locate themselves and find a way out".

"In difficult trails like Kumaraparvatha, we have coordinated with the deputy commissioner and got direction boards installed to help trekkers," he said.

The entry fee varies from Rs 350 to Rs 600, based on the trail. The government has made it compulsory to hire a guide and restricted trekking timings between 6 am and 6 pm.

Chaman Nagaraj, another trek organiser, said, "Karnataka is the only state that charges for trekking. But we have no facilities whatsoever. These days the trek trails are clean, but otherwise there is absolutely nothing".

"One of the attractions in the state are our hiking trails. It is advertised a lot, but we do not have good facilities," he said.

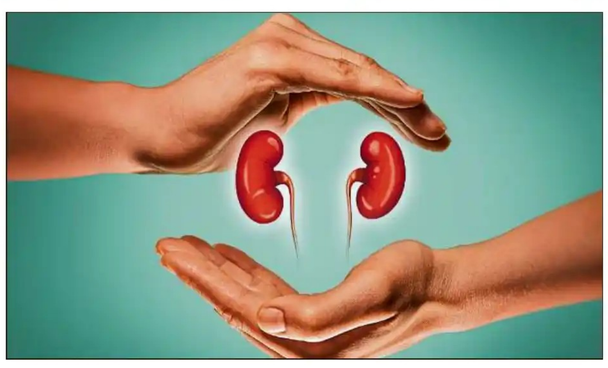
Min: Emergency helpline boards a good idea

Elaborating on the measures put in place on trekking trails, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said that while most trekking trails had basic amenities, there is room for improving them. "We do need to improve the treks by way of better facilities. Emergency response systems are in place and that is why we managed to locate the missing person," he told DH.

Khandre said first aid posts are not envisaged because first aid was available with frontline staff in charge of the trek, in case of exegiencies. "Putting up emergency helpline boards is a good idea. Guides who accompany the trekking group are fully aquatinted with trek route and follow standard protocol during emergency."

Govt permits multi-pair kidney transplantation in regd centres

BENGALURU, DHNS:



The Karnataka government has permitted multi-pair kidney transplantation in all the registered transplant centers across the state.

The guidelines called the 'Karnataka Multi-Pair Kidney Paired Exchange Transplantation Guidelines, 2026' came into effect on Monday.

A significant number of donor-recipient pairs in Karnataka are unable to undergo transplantation due biological incompatibility, including blood group mismatch, positive crossmatch or HLA incompatibility, the order read.

Kidney paired exchange or swap transplantation is an internationally recognised, scientifically validated and ethically accepted procedure to resolve biological incompatibility.

Under this procedure, Person A whose close relatives cannot provide a kidney to them, Person B with the same condition and Person C with the same condition - the relatives of each patient can provide a kidney to the other patient in exchange for receiving a kidney to their own family member.

To minimise complications, the government in its guidelines said that all donors across the swap group shall be biologically compatible with respective swap recipients to whom they are proposed to donate and they should all get into a single agreement.

The government has also said that there must be no commercial transactions between any of the three family members or patients.

The authorisation committee must approve every procedure. Cases involving transplantation across multiple hospitals or multiple districts require joint co-ordination between the respective hospital-level authorisation committees and the state-level authorisation committee.

The authorisation committee must make sure that the proposed swap group is constituted exclusively of near-relative donor-recipient pairs, compatibility of cross-matching across pairs and no individual donor recipient has been excluded from the agreement signed.

All participants must be individually interviewed and video-recorded by the committee, the order said.

All the participants must provide voluntary information, fitness and medical certification and proof of near relatives.

The surgical procedures within a multi-pair swap group should ordinarily be conducted simultaneously. When simultaneous conduct is not operationally feasible, transplants may be conducted in a closely co-ordinated sequence approved by the Authorisation Committee.

The transplantation must be registered with State Organ and Tissue Transplantation Organisation (SOTTO).

NIMHANS launches lay responder care to help road accident victims

BENGALURU, DHNS: In an attempt to strengthen the capacity of youth to provide lay responder care for accident victims in Bengaluru, the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) rolled out a lay responder care module along with a dedicated website and volunteer identity card.

According to the data presented at the launch, an estimated 23 to 25 deaths occur every hour due to road accidents. A critical gap persists in the early response system, with nearly 30 to 50% of victims dying before reaching a hospital and less than one-fourth receiving timely first aid.

Speaking at the event, Parashurama K, Deputy Inspector General of Police and Commissioner, Traffic and Road Safety, Government of Karnataka, emphasized the importance of transforming youth into responsible road users. "Proactive Good Samaritans, trained as lay responders, can play a crucial role before professional medical care arrives. All frontline police personnel and persons working in toll booths should be trained as well," said Parashurama K.

Explaining the module, Dr Gautham M Sukumar, Professor and Head of WHO CC for Injury Prevention, NIMHANS, said that the module is a structured, simulation-based training module aimed at equipping individuals with essential life-saving skills such as scene safety, rapid assessment, hands-only CPR, bleeding control, and basic fracture management. "The programme has already trained over 900 individuals, including around 110 police personnel, and received strong acceptance across institutions. The pilot implementation demonstrated high feasibility, paving the way for future scale-up across districts and integration into institutional training systems," he further said.

Dr Prabha S Chandra, Director of NIMHANS, noted that institute manages approximately 10,000 to 13,000 traumatic brain injury cases annually with over 70-90% attributed to road traffic incidents, thus reinforcing the importance of both prevention and effective post-crash care systems.

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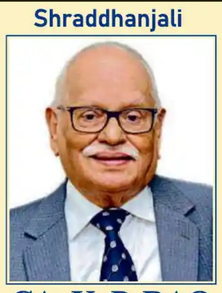

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Govt school enrolment fell by over 15% since 2022: Data

Fad for Eng medium, central syllabus some of the reasons

BENGALURU, DHNS

Government school enrolment in Karnataka has fallen by over 15% in three years, which is roughly one in six students gone from state-run classrooms since 2022-23, according to education department data.

Between 2022-23 and 2025-26, a total of seven lakh students dropped out of government schools.

Admissions in govt schools

2022-23	45,46,523
2023-24	42,94,461
2024-25	40,74,525
2025-26	38,45,845

The government has attributed the drop in enrolment to parents' desire that their children receive English education, preference of central syllabus, migration and the mushrooming of private schools.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and School Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa are bullish on the 'flagship' Karnataka Public Schools (KPS), which is the government's answer to competition from private schools.

Schools branded as KPS offer English education, transportation and K12 (kindergarten to Class 12) in one campus. At present, there are 309 KPS. Another 900 schools are being upgraded as KPS.

Between 2018 and 2025, bilingual (Kannada and English) pre-primary sections have been started in 6,675 government schools. At present, 9,522 government schools have bilingual education from Classes 1 to 5.

Until June 30 this year, the department of school education & literacy is running a statewide admission campaign with a target of increasing enrolment by at least 5%.

While all government schools and pre-university colleges must hike enrolment by 5%, the target is 10% for the KPS.

A total of 57,651 teaching posts are vacant in government primary and high schools, according to data. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced that 15,000 teachers will be hired in the 2026-27 fiscal.

For now, the government is making do with 34,027 guest teachers in primary schools and 9,499 in high schools.

Free midday meal is provided to students at government schools in the state. DH FILE PHOTO

State-level people's convention on April 10

BENGALURU, DHNS: To "intensify the struggle" against closure and merger of government schools, a state-level 'People's Convention' will be held at Freedom Park in the city on April 10, All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) said on Monday.

"Despite intense opposition from the people, the government is proceeding with the closure and merger of schools," the AIDSO added. "Mapping has already been conducted to identify schools for merger, and officials are carrying out surveys for the magnet schools," it added. Writers Hampa Nagarajaiah, K Marulasiddappa, S G Siddaramaiah, Allamaprabhu Bettadur and others will participate.

Lifetime tax shock may...

EV buyers, from Page 1

With EVs (cars) now potentially moving to 5-8% road tax range, this advantage reduces sharply, effectively cutting the upfront benefit by about half in key segments. She also cited Delhi, where after the road tax withdrawal in 2024, purchases were deferred in the near term before rebounding, as postponed demand returned and new launches improved the value proposition.

"For many in the entry and mid-segments, the tax benefit was one of the few clear advantages that helped offset the higher upfront cost of EVs. Without it, we could see more people delaying purchases rather than dropping out altogether," said Sriram Kannan, CEO, Routematic, highlighting the pressure on price-sensitive buyers.

"With Karnataka set to roll back the road tax exemption, electric vehicles are set to become more expensive, and it is likely to influence buying sentiment, especially in the entry- and mid-segments," said Hari Krishna, Founder and CEO, Green Drive Mobility.

"With e-PV penetration still around 5%, policy support remains critical. Its withdrawal can moderate near-term adoption momentum, even as broader structural demand for EVs remains intact," Upadhyay told *DH*.

Sentiment across segments

Shreshth Mishra, Co-founder and Chief People Officer, Simple Energy, said, "The recent move to levy a lifetime tax on electric cars and buses in Karnataka does not directly affect two-wheelers, but it does set the tone for how policy can influence consumer sentiment across the EV ecosystem."

All the carmakers that *DH* contacted declined to comment.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy believes lifetime tax for all electric cars will not deter buyers, because the demand remains strong. "Bengaluru has 1.4 crore people and 1.3 crore vehicles. This suggests that the demand for personal cars remains strong. The decision to levy lifetime tax on all electric cars was taken on the recommendations of the resource mobilisation committee, which explored various avenues to generate additional revenue. Many states already levy such a tax on electric cars. But we are imposing nominal rates to reduce the burden on people," he told *DH*.

Reddy clarified that the tax will not be levied on existing vehicles. The Amendment Bill will come into effect after a gazette notification soon, with the chief minister deciding on the timeline, he added.

SEEKING SERVICE SECURITY

Members of the Karnataka Government Licensed Surveyors' Association stage a protest demanding regularisation of their service, in Belagavi on Monday. DH PHOTO

SC directs NIA to probe judges'...

SIR, from Page 1

During the hearing, the bench questioned the Chief Secretary over the lack of responsiveness in respect of the incident.

"What is the problem? You don't even entertain the call of the Chief Justice," the bench posed the query to the top officer of the state.

In response, Chief Secretary Dushyant Nariala submitted that no call had been made to his phone. In his bid to defend his position, he said that he had travelled to Delhi for a meeting and that he was on a flight between 2 pm and 4 pm at the relevant time.

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, for the officers, sought to explain that the Chief Secretary had been in a meeting with the Election Commission.

The bench, however, told him that calls were probably made during the evening after he had deboarded the flight. The court said that the situation could have been avoided if the Chief Secretary had shared a mobile number and other particulars.

The Chief Secretary replied that the number he used was more secure and had better connectivity. Finally, he expressed regret, pleading that he was extremely apologetic.

The court, however, asked him to tender an apology to the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. The court decided to drop proceedings against the officers, including the DGP, in the suo motu case registered as 'In Re : Safety and Security of Judicial Officers deputed for work relating to SIR of Electoral Rolls in the State of West Bengal and Ancillary Issues'.

In its order, the bench said the NIA would be obligated to register further FIRs if, during the course of its investigation, it was found that additional offences had been committed.

"The investigation reports have to be filed before the NIA court at Kolkata. Until then, the NIA is directed to continue submitting status reports to the Supreme Court from time to time," the bench ordered. Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the NIA, contended that three incidents were directly related to the judicial officers. He submitted that there were 12 FIRs registered by the state police in total, which the NIA could be permitted to investigate.

In the separate batch of writ petitions challenging SIR, the court directed that, in order to bring uniformity in the appellate procedure, it will be appropriate to formally prescribe it.

"We request the Chief Justice of Calcutta HC to constitute a team of senior-most judges to lay down the procedure to be followed by the appellate tribunals," the bench ordered. The bench said that the Chief Justice of the HC has sent a letter and he has stated that as on April 6, 59.15 lakh objections were decided by the judicial officers against a total pendency of over 60 lakhs. The CJI also read out a letter from the Calcutta HC Chief Justice regarding the progress of SIR and disposal of appeals by the appellate tribunals.

The court scheduled the matter for further hearing on April 13.

Night frog endemic to Western Ghats discovered, named Kali

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

A researcher, along with frontline staff of forest department, has discovered 35th night frog that is endemic to Western Ghats. The frog -Nyctibatrachus kali (Kali Night Frog) - has been named after river Kali and Kali Tiger Reserve.

Kali Night Frog appears similar to Kumbara Night Frog, but DNA and call analysis revealed it to be a new species. The new frog has been described as a cryptic species as it appears similar to an existing species, but varies in DNA and acoustics.

Preeti, Assistant Professor at Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT) Bengaluru and lead author, says cryptic species are those that are morphologically similar but differ genetically.

"During our amphibian survey in Castlerock region, we encountered a species that appeared similar to the Kumbara night frog, calls appeared to be similar too. However, Kumbara frog distribution was known from Sharavathi and Aghanashini regions of Karnataka which is at least 100 kms away. Research suggests night frog species have restricted distribution range."

She says when genetically and acoustics more deeply investigated, results showed that it was different species from Kumbara night frog.

Gururaja K V, Professor from Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, MAHE, Bengaluru, gives the credit of discovering the 35th night frog species to the frontline staff of the forest department.

"It is interesting to note that citizen scientists are part of this discovery, and we have a long way to go in this direction as conservation needs collaboration with people, practice and policy."

He says there of 9,027 species of amphibians known across the globe of which, 474 species are reported from India. "However, nearly two out of every five species of amphibians are facing the threat of extinction, both globally as well as in India. Habitat loss is one of the major threats for the global amphibian decline. In addition, climate-change and diseases are also contributing to the current loss of species," he says.

Preeti says : "It is evident that Karnataka's forests and its streams support the diversity of night frogs and more research should be supported and funded to understand the ecological factors that influence its distribution, on how forest streams support the breeding of Kali frog and to map the threats to its distribution."

The team consisted Aravind C K, a PhD scholar at MIT, forest staffers C R Naik and Ramesh Badiger.

Their discovery was published in PeerJ, an international journal recently.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

ELECTION OFFICER
(Appointed by the Karnataka State Board of Auqaf, Bengaluru for the conduct of election)
MUSLIM ORPHANAGE,
43 DICKENSON ROAD, BENGALURU-560042

No: MO/ELN/34/2026 Date: 07-04-2026

NOTIFICATION

Sub: Election for the Constitution of 21 members Executive Committee to Muslim Orphanage, No 43, Dickenson Road, Bengaluru-560042.

Ref: 1. Orders of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka in W.P. No.4833/2026 (GM-WAKF) Connected Cases W.P No. 3692/2026, 4940/2026 dated 13.02.2026
2. Letter No. KSBA/ADM/CMC/01/BNU(N)/23-24 Dt:13.03.2026 Of the Chief Executive Officer, the Karnataka State Board of Auqaf, Bengaluru.

In compliance to the orders of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka and the communication of the Chief Executive Officer, Karnataka State Board of Auqaf under reference above, the following notification is issued.

SN.	Details of Events	Date/Day/Time	Place
01.	Meeting of all the Contesting Candidates	On 10.04.2026 (Friday) at 03.30 PM	At the Office of Muslim Orphanage, 43, Dickenson Road, Bengaluru-560042.
02.	Date of Election and Counting of Votes	On 26.04.2026 From 08:00 A.M. To 04:00 P.M. Sunday, followed by counting	At The Muslim Orphanage, 43, Dickenson Road, Bengaluru-560042.

NOTE: All Contesting Candidates take notice kindly to attend the meeting on 10/04/2026 as referred above to discuss the subjects relating to conduct of election.

SYED AJAZ AHAMED, K.A.S., (Retd.),
THE ELECTION OFFICER, THE MUSLIM ORPHANAGE,
#43, DICKENSON ROAD, BENGALURU - 560 042

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PERSONAL

Change of Name

I, NAGARATHNA w/o Late Shri Muniswamy, aged about 76 years, residing at #711, Hoovadigara Street, Yelahanka Old Town, Bangalore - 560064, have changed my name to Rathnamma w/o Late Shri Muniswamy for all future purposes. Both names refer to one and the same person. This change is made vide Affidavit dated 3rd April 2026, sworn before Notary Public at Bangalore. Voter ID: BCW0489849

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **TOUHEEDULLAH BAHADUR** and **TOUHEEDULLAH MOHEMAD BAHADUR,** residing at # 50/A, 9th Cross, HBR Layout 2nd Block, Kalyan Nagar, Bengaluru- 560043, declare that the above name pertain to me only. Henceforth I shall be known as **TOUHEEDULLAH BAHADUR**, vide affidavit dated 2-4-2026 before XXXVIII Addl. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Bengaluru City.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **BUDDIGA PRASANTHI,** residing at No.167, 2nd Main, 3rd Cross, Near RTO (K.R. Puram), Shirdi Sai Layout, Seegehalli, Virgonagar Post, Bangalore-560049, have changed my name to **SIMHADRI PRASANTHI** vide affidavit dated 01-04-2026 before notary Manjunath T, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called **SIMHADRI PRASANTHI** only

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MUNIRAJU,** Residing at Radiant Lake View 202, A Block, Karnashree Layout, Medahalli, Bengaluru-560049, have changed my name to **M. MUNIRAJU** vide affidavit dtd 06-04-2026 before Notary Thippeswamy T, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called as **M. MUNIRAJU** only.

I, VANI KALLIANPURA resident of No.10 Guruprasad, 7th Cross Opposite Five H English School Brindavan Nagar Bangalore-560054 have changed my name to SUSHMA N SHENOY vide affidavit dated 04/04/2026 sworn before notary Ambika.S, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **GRACY VAZHAPILLY VERGHESE** Residing at # 15, Grace Villa, Hennur Bagalur Road, Kothanur P.O, Bengaluru-560077 have changed my name to **GRACY JOSEPH** for all purposes vide Affidavit Dated: 23/11/2015, sworn before Notary G Mallikarjunappa, Bangalore.

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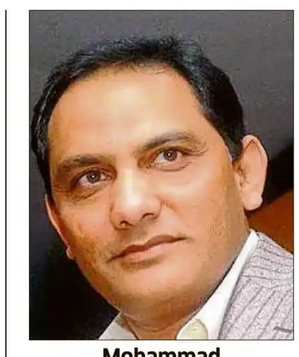
It's 'nepo kid' vs 'hamali's son' in Davangere South

Cong banks on Rs 100-cr budget grant; BJP hopes for division of Muslim votes



Davangere South Assembly constituency

2,31,072 Total voters | 1,13,339 Male | 1,17,690 Female | 43 Third gender

2023 result Cong BJP

Shamanur Shivashankarappa 84, 298

B G Ajay Kumar 56,410

2026 bypoll candidates

Samarth Shamanur Mallikarjun

Srinivas T Dasakariappa

NRUPATHUNGA S K
DAVANGERE, DHNS

Samarth Shamanur Mallikarjun

Srinivas T Dasakariappa

Facing criticism for dynastic politics and Muslim leaders' resentment over denial of Congress ticket for the community, Samarth Shamanur Mallikarjun, son of District In-charge Minister S S Mallikarjun, is trying the electoral test on his grandfather's home turf against BJP's second line leader Srinivas T Dasakariappa.

It has been one of the safest seats in Karnataka for Congress in the last two decades.

The death of veteran Congress leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa has opened up an opportunity for 27-year-old Samarth, the third generation leader of the Shamanur family.

Samarth's father Malikarjun represents Davangere North in the Assembly, while his mother Prabha is the party's Lok Sabha member from Davangere seat.

This has given the BJP a stick to beat the Congress nominee with - it has asked voters to end a 'single family's political dominance'.

Voters had backed Shivashankarappa here four times in a row since 2008 (he was elected MLA six times).

Muslims form the biggest chunk of voters (70,000 to 75,000 out of a total of 2.31 lakh).

The Congress believes that it has addressed the community's resentment by convincing party leader and former councillor Sadiq Pailwan, who had entered the fray as a rebel candidate, to retire.

But it is skeptical whether all Muslim votes will come into its kitty, since there are 13 Muslim candidates still in the fray.

The Congress had to rush Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan, who was canvassing for votes for it in Kerala, to Davangere to campaign for Samarth.

The party is also apprehensive of how the voters view Samarth, due to his lack of political experience and exposure as he did his schooling in Tamil Nadu and degree in UK.

Though Samarth is presenting himself as down to earth, campaigning barefoot, his foreign-returned image may keep the electors, a majority from the labour class, away from him.

However, the fact that the Shamanur family has had an enduring bond with the people may come in handy for him. The chain of educational institutions, hospitals, mills and factories run by the family has given employment to several people in Davangere South.

The grand old party is also banking on the announcement of Rs 100 crore in the budget for the constituency, along with the five guarantees.

Adil, who runs a grocery shop in Azadnagar, told *DH*, "We are sad that our community was not given the Congress ticket. But we have no option, but to back the party. We have nothing against the BJP candidate. But that party's workers don't visit our wards to seek votes".

Malleshappa, a farm labourer, said there was an yearning for change among voters this time as Shivashankarappa represented this seat multiple times.

The BJP is highlighting the humble background of its candidate, Srinivas, whose father had worked as a hamali for some time.

The party is indirectly asking Muslim voters not to back the Congress as victory of Samarth would mean no ticket for the community for another 3 to 4 decades. It is asking Muslims to defeat Congress 'to protect their self respect'.

The support of JD(S) may bring in some portion of votes to the saffron party.

The BJP has also promised that Davangere South would be transformed into a model constituency by establishing hitech hospitals and educational institutions. Among castes, Lingayats, SC/STs and other backward classes are in good numbers. The BJP is worried about the division of Lingayat votes as its candidate is from ST community, while Samarth is from Lingayat community.

It is hoping to garner over 50% of the Lingayat votes and a division of Muslim votes.

Sharada, a BJP voter, said, "The Shamanur family has the knack of swinging the result in its favour in the last two days of campaigning". The party is praying that silent voters will support it this time round.

Mohammad Azharuddin

Azhar to campaign for Cong nominee Samarth today

DAVANGERE, DHNS: Former India cricketer and Telangana minister Mohammad Azharuddin, along with KPCC president D K Shivakumar, will campaign for Congress nominee from Davangere South Assembly constituency Samarth Shamanur on the last day of the campaigning on Tuesday.

According to DCC general secretary Dinesh K Shetty, Azhar and Shivakumar will offer prayers to the goddess Durgambika Devi and at Hazrat Syed Kadak Shah Wali Dargah in the city before taking out a road show. The roadshow will pass through Madakari Nayaka Circle, Doddapete, Old Betur Road, Medina Circle, Azad Nagar, Basha Nagar, Akhtar Raza Circle, Shivanagar, and will culminate near the SSM Nagar stadium at 5 pm.

District in-charge Minister S S Mallikarjun, MP Prabha Mallikarjun, MLAs D G Shanthanagowda, B Devendrappa, K S Basavanthappa, Basavaraj V Shivaganga among other leaders will be present.

BJP eyes new bastions for clear majority in 2028

Saffron party to focus on social expansion, leadership building

PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

State BJP president B Y Vijayendra, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, legislators B P Harish and C T Ravi take part in a roadshow seeking votes for BJP bypoll candidate Srinivas T Dasakariappa, in Davangere on Monday.
DH PHOTO/SATISH BADIGER

The BJP rules in a majority of states in the country. But in Karnataka, it is at the crossroads. The BJP emerged the single largest party twice – 2008 and 2018, but failed to get a clear majority.

Ahead of the 2028 Assembly polls, the party is focusing on social expansion, grassroots outreach and leadership building.

On Monday (its foundation day), leader of Opposition in Assembly R Ashoka announced 'Hallige Nadeyiri' – a village outreach programme from April 7 to 12, to honour workers who contributed to BJP's growth and taking the Modi government schemes to the people.

From two seats and 3.8% vote share in 1985, to its highest 110 seats with 33.86% vote share in 2008 (36% in 2023), BJP formed its first government in Karnataka in 2008, following 'Operation Kamala'.

The party has reached a saturation in Lingayat belt (north and central Karnataka), and unless the vote share crosses 42-45%, it cannot attain majority, senior leaders said.

State BJP president B Y Vijayendra said, "We will focus on nurturing young leaders from across communities. Our focus will shift to Kalyana Karnataka and old Mysuru region (Vokkaliga belt), especially the seats we lost in 2023".

B Y VIJAYENDRA
BJP state president

"Expanding social base is crucial and the party will focus on nurturing young leaders from across the communities. Our focus will shift to Kalyana Karnataka and old Mysuru region (Vokkaliga belt), especially the seats we lost in 2023.

Former CM Basavaraj Bommai said, "BJP has come a long way, slow but steady. Electorally, 2028 looks bright. Pro-incumbency is a growing trend in other BJP-ruled states. In Karnataka, we hope to achieve it through positive politics. No party can rely on a single community any more. The smaller communities too will have a say in party and politics".

With mass leaders like B S Yediyurappa relegated to sidelines, there is need for credible leadership. The party scores better in parliamentary elections than Assembly elections due to popularity of Modi.

For instance, BJP got 104 seats in the 2018 Assembly polls, but was leading in 175 assembly segments in the 2019 parliamentary elections, despite Congress-JD(S) coalition.

"It took Yediyurappa 40 years to become a mass leader," said Bommai, hinting that leadership evolved only with time.

On the rout in 2023, leaders feel the party failed to counter Congress' narrative on "40% commission" and "PayCM" campaigns. The decision on enhanced SC/ST quota and the SC internal quota came "too late" to impact elections.

Bommai said the party would revisit unfinished agendas and talk to voters. "It was Congress propaganda. The reservation order was issued in November and was not poll oriented".

"If five guarantees really made people's lives better, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah wouldn't be camping and campaigning in these bypolls," said Vijayendra, adding bypolls energized BJP cadre.

Plaint against Simha for remarks on Siddaramaiah

DAVANGERE, DHNS: A complaint has been filed against former MP and BJP leader Pratap Simha for remarks that he made against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at an election rally in Bagalkot.

Addressing a rally in Aihole, which falls under the jurisdiction of Amengad police station, Simha had alleged that Siddaramaiah claimed to eat meat on Hindu festivals such as Ugadi and Deepavali. "Siddaramaiah's intent behind issuing such statements is to hurt the sentiments of Hindus while securing the votes of the Muslim community," Simha had said.

Accordingly, a complaint has been filed against Simha for violation of the Model Code of Conduct, confirmed Bagalkot Superintendent of Police Siddarth Goyal.

Leopard found dead with bullet injuries; Minister orders probe

MYSURU/BENGALURU, DHNS: A leopard was found dead with bullet injuries, around two kilometres from Gullehalla forest area, Periyapatna limits in Hunsur wildlife division in Mysuru district, on Monday.

Dr Adarsh, who conducted the post mortem, reported that three bullets were found in the carcass of the animal.

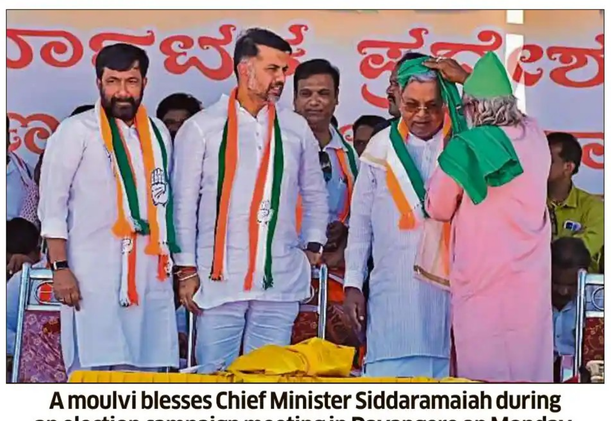
"The death of a female leopard due to bullet injuries is painful. This confirms that poaching for wildlife is still going on. A detailed investigation should be conducted," Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said in Bengaluru.

In a letter to the Chief Wildlife Warden, the minister said the incident looks like a poaching attempt. "The incident gives strength to suspicion that poaching for wildlife parts has continued in the state. In view of this, a probe should be conducted," he said, adding that action should be initiated against forest officials, if any lapses on their part have led to a failure to check poaching.

Guarantees won't be stopped, says CM

Flays BJP for spreading lies that they would be stopped

DAVANGERE, DHNS



A moulvi blesses Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during an election campaign meeting in Davangere on Monday.
DH PHOTO/SATISH BADIGER

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah reiterated that the guarantees will not be stopped in the state and they would continue as long as the government exists.

He was addressing voters at an open meeting organised by the Congress party near Durgambika temple on Boddal Road in the city on Monday.

He said the government is spending Rs 52,000 crore annually on these schemes. But the BJP is spreading false information that they would be stopped. It is not true, he clarified.

On loan borrowings, he said the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has borrowed Rs 165 lakh crore in 12 years. The BJP leaders in the state are talking about the state government's loan without any hesitation. The BJP is known for lies and the lies are their household gods,' he criticised.

Slamming the BJP, he said that the BJP leaders, who led the government in Karnataka for nine years, are not talking about the development work they did in the state during their tenure. Instead, they are limited to criticising me, he charged.

Coming down heavily on the BJP, he said, "They are criticising me because I am working for the poor. I have given many programmes for the poor. The Congress is an inclusive party. It includes leaders of all castes and religions."

Siddaramaiah said the BJP's job is to divide castes and religions. It is working to divide society. Former chief minister B S Yediyurappa started Operation Lotus. The BJP leaders are corrupt, he criticised.

He also exuded confidence that Congress candidates will win the byelections in Davangere South and Bagalkot.

"We have delivered what we have promised. We had made 592 promises in 2023. Out of these, we have fulfilled 300 promises," he claimed.

He also claimed that the government is providing five guarantees without any middleman, commission or bribe. "We are transferring money directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries."

"When the guarantees were announced, Modi had opposed them. He had said that the state would be financially bankrupt. But the financial condition of the state government is better than that of the Centre. The Centre's GDP in 2025-26 is 7.14, while Karnataka's GDP is 8.1," he defended.

AICC Secretary Ashishek Dutta, Rajya Sabha member Naseer Hussain, District incharge Minister S S Mallikarjun, MP Prabha Mallikarjun and others were present on the occasion.

Parameshwara bats for Siddu as CM for full term

MYSURU, DHNS: Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Monday that Siddararamaiah will continue to be chief minister for a full five-year term.

"Congress high command officially declared Siddaramaiah as CM in 2023. There is no need for separate clarification from the high command every time. In 2013, they hadn't explicitly announced a 5-year term, yet he completed it. This time, his tenure is until 2028, and he must complete it," he told reporters here.

Downplaying rumours of a rift or 'power-sharing' formula, he said the high command has not created any confusion. "Has it ever spoken about a change or specific timeframe? D K Shivakumar is our leader, the KPCC president and the deputy CM; he has no issues. As the CM himself said in the Assembly, all our MLAs are capable of becoming CM," he added.

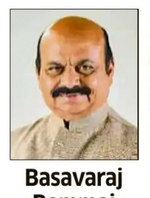
'Decision on May 4'

Former minister K N Rajanna told reporters in Tumakuru that the high command will take a final decision on change of leadership or Cabinet expansion after May 4. He said that KPCC president too would be changed.

Rajanna said that there was no consensus in Congress on internal reservation. The issue, if not properly addressed, would affect the party's prospects, he added.

Bommai declines honorary doctorate, says netas shouldn't get it

BENGALURU, DHNS



Basavaraj Bommai

Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai has declined to accept an honorary doctorate from the Haveri University, and said that politicians should not be considered for such recognition.

"I have already informed the vice-chancellor that I will not be accepting the honorary doctorate," Bommai, the Haveri BJP MP, said in a statement. "I do not seek any awards in public service. I consider the love and trust of the people to be the greatest honour in public service."

Bommai's stance comes even as public universities are bestowing honorary doctorates on politicians.

Last week, Congress MLC and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's confidant K Govindaraj and former JD(S) MLC B M Farooq were given honorary doctorates by Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University. Earlier this year, former minister PGR Sindhia received an honorary doctorate by Gulbarga University. Last year, Speaker U T Khader and former MLC D Madegowda received honorary doctorates.

"In my view, an honorary doctorate is an honour that should be conferred on individuals who have rendered exceptional and significant service in a particular field over a long period. Hence, it should be awarded to such achievers," Bommai said.

"It is my personal opinion that it is not appropriate to confer honorary doctorates on politicians or those engaged in social service on their own accord," Bommai said, calling for reconsideration of this practice.

Last month, Higher Education Minister Dr M C Sudhakar called for the constitution of an expert panel to regulate honorary doctorates citing "lack of standards."

In a letter to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, who is also the chancellor of public universities, Sudhakar said the law empowers universities to confer honorary doctorates on "distinguished individuals" for their contributions. "To preserve the dignity, credibility and sanctity of honorary degrees, it has become necessary to evolve uniform regulatory guidelines," Sudhakar stated.

The proposed review will cover honorary doctorates conferred by public, private and deemed-to-be universities.

Sringeri Assembly segment: HC directs recounting of 270 rejected postal ballots

BENGALURU, DHNS: The High Court of Karnataka on Monday directed for recounting of 279 rejected postal ballots and fresh declaration of the result pertaining to the Sringeri Assembly constituency.

Justice R Nataraj passed this order after allowing the election petition filed by D N Jeevaraj, the defeated BJP candidate who challenged the election of Congress candidate T D Rajegowda.

The court granted stay for two weeks on this order upon the request from the advocate for Rajegowda to enable him to challenge the same before the Supreme Court.

Rajegowda had won the 2023 assembly elections from Sringeri constituency by a margin of 201 votes. Challenging this, Jeevaraj had claimed that the postal ballots were not properly verified and counted.

Socio-edu survey report likely to be submitted this month

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes (KSCBC) is likely to submit the much-awaited report on the social and educational survey - caste census - to the government later this month.

DH has learnt that the commission may complete the report soon. According to a source, the commission may submit the report around April 20.

KSCBC chairman Madhusudan Naik confirmed to *DH* that the commission intends to submit the report in April.

According to sources, a meeting held on n Monday didn't finalise the report. It may be finalised in the next sitting, once the translation copies are ready, sources added.

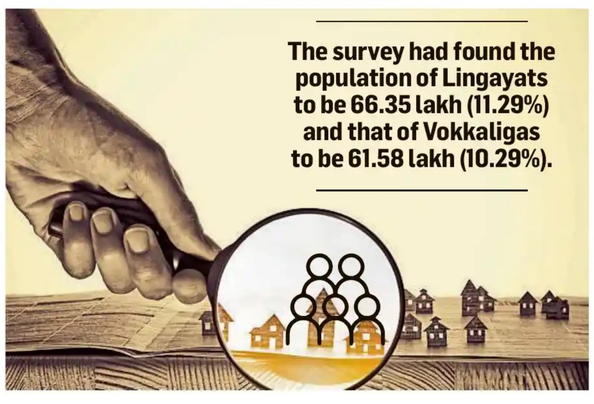
The report is based on the state-wide social and educational survey carried out towards the end of 2025. The physical leg of the survey was conducted from September 22 to October 31, 2025. The online self-enumeration exercise was extended for another month (throughout November). As many as 5.85 crore of the estimated 6.86 crore people in the state (85.54%) were enumerated.

The survey was planned after the government set aside the social and educational survey report submitted by the Jayaprakash Hegde Commission (based on the Kantharaj Commission survey of 2015), claiming that a new survey was needed since 10 years had passed since its submission.

Key aspects

One of the most crucial aspects of the report will be the revision of the backward classes' list (addition of newly found castes and deletion of castes that have ceased to be backward). For decades, proponents of social justice have argued against the presence of the dominant, landowning Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities on the list.

The O Chinnappa Reddy-led backward classes commission report (1990) had recommended that Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities not be included on the backward classes' list, but they have remained nonetheless.



The survey had found the population of Lingayats to be 66.35 lakh (11.29%) and that of Vokkaligas to be 61.58 lakh (10.29%).

A former member of KSCBC told *DH* that the commission can only revise the backward classes' list but is not authorised to tabulate a new one.

Secondly, changes are expected within the list in terms of categories. Currently, there are three categories 1, 2 and 3 and five sub-categories - 1 (95 castes), 2A (103), 2B (1), 3A (3) and 3B (6).

It's expected that the number of categories may change, and some castes may be displaced among the groups.

According to a source, the number of sub categories is likely to be increased from 5 to 9.

The population details of each caste is expected to be highly sensitive and volatile, especially since historically it has led to huge controversies. The Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities had accused the Kantharaj-led commission's survey of being "unscientific" and "underevaulating" their numbers.

The survey had found the population of Lingayats to be 66.35 lakh (11.29%) and that of Vokkaligas to be 61.58 lakh (10.29%).

The commission will also take a stand on the creamy layer doctrine. Currently, 'creamy layers' amongst category 2A, 2B, 3A and 3B are not eligible for reservation, but the creamy layer concept doesn't apply to category 1, which mostly consists of nomadic, semi-nomadic and highly sensitive communities. It essentially means that all category 1 members, irrespective of their social and educational status, will continue to benefit from reservation. The creamy layer concept is also not applicable to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Excise policy: Kejriwal appears in HC seeking recusal of judge

NEW DELHI, PTI

Former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday appeared in person in the Delhi High Court seeking recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from hearing the CBI petition challenging the discharge of the AAP convenor and all other accused in the liquor policy case.

Justice Sharma took Kejriwal's application for her recusal on record and listed it for hearing on April 13, after she was informed that a plea for transfer of the case to another HC bench filed before the apex court has been withdrawn.

Arvind Kejriwal

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, argued that the court was not a forum for theatrics and Kejriwal should discharge his lawyer if he wanted to appear in person in the case. He strongly objected to the recusal application and said Kejriwal's allegations against the "institution" were frivolous and contemptuous.

"Some people in this country make a career out of making baseless allegations against everyone. That will have to be taken seriously. It is an allegation against the institution, and we will have to support that institution," Mehta said.

He also informed that a total of seven discharged accused have filed applications seeking the judge's recusal as part of a "well thought out design".

"If anyone else wants to file the application, please do it so that I can decide it once and for all," Justice Sharma said.

Justice Sharma also said that she would pass an order on whether to grant more time to Kejriwal and other respondents to file their replies to the CBI's plea.

Kejriwal asserted that he would argue the recusal application himself and would exercise his "legal rights" on the aspect of being represented by a lawyer subsequently.

He requested the court to take his application on record as, being a litigant appearing in person, he was unable to e-file it on the high court portal.

Himanta junks 'passports' claim, says Pak social media info source

Riniki lodges FIR against Khera and others

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday the Opposition Congress used "fake" information from a Pakistani social media group about his wife holding multiple passports and owning properties abroad.

Addressing a press conference at Vajpayee Bhawan, BJP's state headquarters, Sarma said the information about his wife Riniki Sarma Bhuyan was fake and sourced from a social media group 'Pakistanis in Ajman'. He also said her photo was morphed on a lost passport of a person from that country.

"I have told you before that Pakistan-based elements are trying to influence the elections in Assam. Even Pakistan TV channels are hosting discussions on Assam elections. I am concerned that the Congress party took the help of Pakistan to make such fake allegations against my family. I am surprised to see Tarun Gogoi's son stooping so low. This is not a simple fraud case but a crime against the nation," Sarma said.

Sarma's claim came a day after Congress leaders Pawan Khera and Gaurav Gogoi claimed that Sarma's wife holds passports of the UAE, Egypt and Antigua-Barbuda, and owns two properties in Dubai and assets in shell companies in the US.

Himanta Biswa Sarma

Riniki on Monday lodged an FIR at Panbazar police station in Guwahati against Khera and others seeking legal action for the "concocted" information.

Sarma said the charges have been made to influence the poll results, which is "punishable under the law".

Earlier, Sarma had alleged that Gogoi and his wife Elizabeth, a British citizen, had links with Pakistan and the ISI. Gogoi rejected the allegations.

Gogoi, who is leading the Congress-led Opposition camp, dared Sarma to swear on the Bhagavad Gita and publicly deny the allegations.

After addressing a rally at Raha in central Assam, Gaurav said, "I told this yesterday, and I am repeating it now... I can say under an oath on the Bhagavad Gita that I don't have any property in London as alleged by Sarma. Can he do that? I challenge him to come to a common place and do the same under an oath on the Bhagavad Gita."

Gogoi said Sarma did not disclose the information about his wife's properties in his election affidavit, and this would lead to the cancellation of his candidature.

"Has Himanta Biswa Sarma disclosed his or his family's wealth and properties abroad in his election affidavit? Sarma should welcome an investigation if he has nothing to hide," Gogoi said.

The Opposition led by Gogoi has set the target to oust the Sarma-led government while the BJP seeks to register a hat-trick by winning the elections for the third straight term.

The Assembly elections in Assam are scheduled on April 9.

Security scare at Delhi Assembly as car breaches gate, 3 held

Security scare, from Page 1

The incident occurred around 2 pm when the UP-registered vehicle entered the premises.

As soon as he entered the premises, officials said, the driver proceeded towards the office of Speaker Vijender Gupta and placed a bouquet near the porch and sped away. There was less security at the gate through which the driver entered, as the Assembly was not in session.

Authorities are treating the incident as a security breach, officials said, adding it has raised "serious" concerns.

Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Ravindra Yadav reached the spot soon after the incident, while investigators started checking CCTV footage and intensified efforts to apprehend the person behind the wheel.

Forensic teams also examined the bouquet, which was kept near the Speaker's office, while the bomb disposal squad and dog squad, which conducted searches, ruled out any explosive threat.

Polls: Rising heat, erratic rains to test climate risk preparedness

Heatwave threat to south; Assam to face thundershowers

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

As parties hit the ground for the high-stakes electoral battles in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala and Puducherry, experts have warned that lack of adequate mitigation measures may expose crores of voters and lakhs of election duty officials to climate risks, especially heatwaves combined with humidity.

Together, about 17.5 crore voters are expected to participate in elections in 824 assembly constituencies. As per the heat wave outlook issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal are threatened by heatwave whereas Assam is likely to witness fairly widespread rainfall and thundershowers in the week leading to elections.

In an assessment made ahead of the polls, Climate Trends, a research-based consultancy initiative, pointed to the IMD data for five years (2021-25) showing a shift towards hotter, more humid and "more unpredictable" April weather across the regions with increasing extreme events.

"The southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala are likely to experience intensifying heat and high humidity. These conditions pose a threat of creating dangerous "wet-bulb" conditions that significantly increase heat stress and health risks like heat strokes," Climate Trends said.

Data on the number of deaths due to various natural calamities in India from 2017 to 2022 shows that lightning caused the highest number of deaths. Figures ranged from 2,357 in 2018 to 2,887 in 2022. Heat stroke also appeared as a significant cause of mortality (over 1,000 deaths), particularly in 2017 and 2022. While the total number of deaths fluctuated each year, lightning and heat stroke were persistent major contributors.

Mahesh Palawat, vice president, Meteorology and Climate Change, Skymet Weather, stated that the evolving climate conditions could directly impact elections in the form of reduced voter turnout, health risks and operational disruptions among others.

"We are already at the peak of pre-monsoon activities, which have been on the rise due to rising temperatures fueled by climate change," he added.

Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) O P Rawat said the Election Commission of India has considered the challenges of climate change while planning the elections and cited the polling station trackers that provide information regarding the queue to help voters plan.

Congress accuses Modi of politicising women's quota

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Congress on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of using the proposal for early implementation of the 33% women's quota as an "election issue", saying people in poll-bound states and a Union Territory will give him a "resounding reply and decisively reject the BJP".

The response came after Modi said during an election rally in Assam that the women's quota would be implemented from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and sought support from all parties.

"How much more bogus can he get?" he asked, while emphasising that the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, was passed unanimously by Parliament in September 2023, with Congress demanding its implementation from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections itself.

However, the Modi government introduced a condition that the reservation would come into effect only after delimitation and the Census are completed, and Article 334-A was inserted at the time, Ramesh said.

"Now, all of a sudden, to divert public attention from the grave economic crisis and to influence voters in the five states, the Prime Minister has decided that Article 334-A should be amended to do away with the delimitation and Census prerequisites. He has woken up after 30 months and made another U-turn," he said.

"Now he is using this as an election issue. The people in the five states will give him a resounding reply and decisively reject the BJP," Ramesh added.

The government now plans to amend the Constitution for the early implementation of the women's quota after the delimitation of constituencies based on the 2011 Census, instead of the Census 2027. The Budget Session is being reconvened on April 16 for the passage of these measures.

Agniveer recruitment rally in Mysuru

MYSURU, DHNS: The Indian Army will conduct an 'Agniveer Rally' at Chamundi Vihar Stadium, Nazarbad in Mysuru, from April 19 to 27.

Chairing a meeting of officials here on Monday Recruitment Officer Colonel Vivek Jamadar said that around 6,235 aspirants will take part in the Agniveer Rally in Mysuru. "A written exam was conducted in June 2025. The second phase of exam (screening) will be conducted here."

"In all, 6,043 men and 192 women aspirants will take part in the rally. Several tests, including physical fitness, will be conducted for 800 aspirants every day. Those clearing the tests will be selected for medical examination. The rally for female aspirants will be conducted on April 27," he said.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast April 07: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	34.2	16.4	00
Bidar	34.4	20.6	00
Vijayapura	36	17.4	00
Dharwad	34.2	18	00
Haveri	34.6	20.6	00
Kalaburagi	38	24	00
Raichur	38	22	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	33	22.1	00
Karwar	33.6	23.8	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	34	26	00

INTERIOR SOUTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	31.6	17.8	00
Bengaluru	33.6	22.8	00
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	35.3	20.9	00
Davangere	35.5	20	00
Hassan	33.7	14.5	00
Mysuru	34.2	20	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	33.8	20.6	00
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	32.7	17.7	00
Kolkata	30.4	23	0.6
Mumbai	31.3	22.9	00
Chennai	37.7	29	00
Pune	33.7	17.8	00
Hyderabad	37	26.8	00
Th'puram	35.8	27.9	00

KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru.

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Karnataka Housing Board invite tender through Karnataka Public Procurement portal for below mentioned work.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Work Indent & IFT No.	Amount put to tender (in Rs.)	Last date of submission
1.	Sinking of Borewell at KHB Staff Quarters in Vijayanagara, Bengaluru.	Tender Reference No. KHB/2026-27/OW/ WORK_INDENT 737 & IFT No. 03/2026-27, Date: 04.04.2026	9,32,272/-	13.04.2026 Upto 4.00 PM

For further information, contact below mentioned Office Address:
Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru.
Telephone No.: 080-22273511. Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

DIPR/CP/YC/74/2026-27 Sd/- Executive Engineer, KHB, Bengaluru

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ರಾಯಚೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ
E-mail:itstaff_ulb_raichura@yahoo.com Website:-www.raichurcity.gov.in
Phone No:08532-226768 Fax No:08532-226316
ಸಂ.ರಾಮಪ/ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ/ಕಾ/ಅ/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:31–03–2026.

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ 2.0 ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ).

ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿಯಪಡಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ, ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ತೋರಿಸಿದ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ನಂಬರ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ 2.0 ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನು ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಸದರಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಇಚ್ಚಿಸುವ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು WWW.KPPP.Karnataka.gov.in ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು, ಹಾಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ WWW.raichurcity. mrc.gov.in ರಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕ್ರ. ಸಂ	ಅನುದಾನದ ವಿವರ	ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ವಿವರ	ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ನಂಬರ
1	ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Operation and Maintenance of Rampur Water Treatment Plant for Drinking Water Supply to Raichur City of Raichur City. **Estimate Cost Rs. 188.00 Lakhs. (15 Days)**	DMA/2025-26/ SE7606
2	ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Operation and Maintenance of Jack well, Chicksugur Water Treatment Plant and IPS for Drinking Water Supply to Raichur City of Raichur City. **Estimate Cost Rs. 494.58 Lakhs. (15 Days)**	DMA/2025-26/ SE7605
3	2021–22 & 2024–25 15ನೇಹಣಕಾಸು (ನಿರ್ಬಂಧಿತ) ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Providing and Fixing of Chlorinator in Water Treatment Plants Under the Jurisdiction of Raichur City. **Estimate Cost Rs.77,44,340/- (7 Days)**	DMA/2025-26/ WS/ WORK_ INDENT55740/ CALL-2
4	ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Engaging Of Manpower On Outsource Basis For Pump Operator Water Supply at City Corporation Raichur. **Estimate Cost Rs. 51,20,000/- (7 Days)**	DMA/2025-26/ SE7600
5	ಕೆ.ಕೆ.ಆರ್.ಡಿ.ಬಿ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Providing Street lights from Askihal to Bypass junction on SH 20,Lingasur road In Raichur city. **Estimate Cost Rs. 1,00,00,000/- (15 Days)**	DMA/2026-27/ EL/ WORK_ INDENT56984
6	ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Supply and installation of Desktop and Printer to Raichur Lokayukta Office, Raichur District. **Estimate Cost Rs.5,10,000/- (7 Days)**	DMA/2025-26/ IND6017 /CALL-2

DIP/RCR/09KSMCA/11/2026-27 ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ರಾಯಚೂರು.

INSTITUTE OF NEPHRO-UROLOGY
(Government of Karnataka-Autonomous Institute-Regd. No.1052/03-04)
Victoria Hospital Campus, Bengaluru-02. e-Mail: nephrourology.institute@gmail.com
Website: www.nephrourology.karnataka.gov.in
No: INU/TND/LND/15/2025-26 Date: 06.04.2026

SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

Institute of Nephro-Urology, Victoria Hospital Campus, Bengaluru-02 invites tenders from the eligible tenderers through the Electronic Tender process for the following subjects.
1.Providing Outsourced Laundry Services at INU (Call-II)
Last Date For Online Submission of Tender is **15.04.2026 at 5.30 P.M.** For any further details please logon to: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Note: For any further information and announcements regarding this tender please keep on watching our website i.e., **https://nephrourology.karnataka.gov.in/**
Sd/- Director, Institute of Nephro-Urology, Bengaluru

KARNATAKA STATE LAW UNIVERSITY
Navanagar, Hubballi-580025
Accredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC
0836-2222472 Website: www.kslu.karnataka.gov.in
Email: kslu.registrar@gmail.com

No. KSLU/CDC/Affiliation Notification/2026-27/16/C
Date: 06-04-2026

AFFILIATION NOTIFICATION

The Karnataka State Law University, Hubballi invites application for Starting of New Colleges/Courses and Additional Sections from the affiliated Law Colleges/Managements situated in the state of Karnataka for the academic year **2026-27,** Under section **58** of Karnataka State Law University Act **2009,** for **3**year LL.B, **5**year B.A., LL.B, **5** year B.B.A., LL.B, and **5**year B.Com.,LL.B., Courses.

The application may be downloaded from KSLU website and are also available in the office of Registrar, KSLU, Navanagar, Hubballi-580025. On payment of **2,000/- For details see the KSLU's Website: www.kslu.karnataka.gov.in** Sd/-
DIPR/DWD/23/Deshpandepublicity/2026-27 REGISTRAR

Government of Karnataka
Karnataka Public Works, Department, Sirasi Division(U.K), Karnataka Ph: 08384-223164, Fax: 08384-224100
No. PWD/SR./Dn/AE/IFT/ 4059CMIDP/2025-26/4016 Date:31.03.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (IFT) (SHORT TERM) KW-4
e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

(1) The Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Sirasi invites tenders from eligible tenderers, for the construction of works detailed in the Table below. The tenderers may submit tenders for any or all of the works given in the Table. **The price tender which will be opened only if the Tenderer is found to be qualified to execute the tendered works. The Tenderers are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the Instructions to Tenderers to qualify for award of the contract. (26.03.2021)** (2) Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka e-Procurement website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/eportal/index.seam** under login for Contractors: (3) Tenders must be accompanied by EMD Declaration form Proforma attached (4) Tenders must be electronically submitted (on-line through internet) with in the date and time published in e-procurement portal. The technical bid will be opened after prescribed time and date in the eprocurement portal, in the presence of the Tenderers who wish to attend at the Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Department, SIRSI Division. (5) Other details can be seen in the tender documents
(Total: 1 Work)
(1) Last date and time for Tender Queries/Clarifications: **08-04-2026 up to 16.00.00** (2) Last Date and Time for receipt of tenders: **09-04-2026 up to 16.00.00** (3) Date and Time for opening of Technical Bid: **10-04-2026 @ 16.30.00** (4) Date and Time for opening of Financial Bid: **13-04-2026 @16.00.00**
Sd/- Executive Engineer
Public Work Department Division
Sirsi (Uttara Kannada)
DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/17/26-27 dt. 06.04.2026

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT ROAD DIVISION, DUMKA

E-Procurement Notice
Tender Reference No.- RCD/DUMKA/514
Date - 06.04.2026

1	Name of Work-	Construction of High Level Bridge over Dhowae River at ch 41st km and Construction of High Level Bridge over Mudko River at ch 30th km of Dumka - Hansdiha Road under Road Division Dumka for the year 2026 -27.
2	Estimated cost(In Rs)	Rs 9,34,99,100.00
3	Time of completion	Twenty Four Months
4	Date of Publication of Tender on Website	17.04.2026 at 10.30 AM
5	Last date/Time for receipt of bids	13.05.2026 Up to 12.00 Noon
6	Date of opening of Tender	14.05.2026 at 12.30 PM
7	Name & address of office Inviting tender	Office of The Executive Engineer Road Construction Department Road Division, Dumka.
8	Contact no. of Procurement Officer	8252424164
9	Helpline number of e-Procurement cell	0651-2401010

Further details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in
Executive Engineer,
Road Construction Department,
PR 376744 (Road)26-27*D Road Division, Dumka

Government of Jharkhand
Jharkhand Rural Health Mission Society
Department of Health, Medical Education & Family Welfare
Namkum, Ranchi.
Phone No: 0651-2261000, 2261856 & 2261002
Mail ID: proc-health@jharkhandmail.gov.in

Tender Notice No. GEM/2026/B/7417457 Date: 06/04/2026

Urgent
Tender Notice Through GeM Portal

Jharkhand Rural Health Mission Society, Namkum, Ranchi invites EOI through tender from the registered and eligible firms for **Request for Qualification (RFQ) Cum Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of an Agency for the Strengthening/Establishment, Operation & Management of Blood Centres in the State of Jharkhand.**
The Blank tender documents with detailed conditions can be obtained through web site http://gem.gov.in.

Sl. No.	Particulars	Details
1	Name of Work	Request for Qualification (RFQ) Cum Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of an Agency for the Strengthening/ Establishment, Operation & Management of Blood Centres in the State of Jharkhand.
2	Publication Date of Tender on website	06/04/2026
3	Pre-Bid Meeting Date and Time	15/04/2026 at 12:00 PM (R.C.H. Conference Hall, Namkum, Ranchi, Jharkhand-834010)
4	Last Date & time for receipt of bid on website	27/04/2026 at 03:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Technical Bid through website	27/04/2026 at 03:30 PM
6	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	30,00,000/- (Thirty Lakh Only)
7	Contact no. of procurement person	9110943588

Note :- The above dates may change due to abrupt declaration of holidays. Hard copies of Technical Bid will not be entertained.
Sd/-
PR 376798 Health Med Edu and Family Welfare (26-27)_D State Nodal Officer Procurement Cell
Jharkhand Rural Health Mission Society, Namkum, Ranchi

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

For and on behalf of the President of India, Chief Engineer (Con)/II/Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043, S.E. Railway invites e-Tender for the following work. Following tender has been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in.** The tender will be closed at 12:00 Hrs on due date : **e-Tender Notice No.** : 4630-GRC-CE-C-II-14-2026; **Closing Date** : 28.04.2026; **Brief Description of Works** : Yard remodeling works of Badampahar station and other miscellaneous works in connection with Badampahar-Kendujhargarh line under jurisdiction of Dy. CE (Con), Tatanagar of S. E. Railway; **Approx. Cost:** ₹ 59.31 Crore, **Bid Security:** ₹ 1,18,61,500.00; **Completion period:** 24 months; Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **NB:** "Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders." **(PR- 20)**

EASTERN RAILWAY

The following E-Tender is invited by the Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/ (General), Eastern Railway, Sealdah, 2nd Floor, Remote Control Building, Kolkata-700014 in connection with the following works : **Tender No. : ELEG-OT-1255-2025-26, Date : 02.04.2026. Particulars of the work :** (i) Replacement of RDSO type Train indication board at 7 locations (AQR, BBT, KBGB, BSHT, PPGT, EDG & GBG) over Sealdah division which will pass their codal life (ii) Provision of Train Indication Board at BARU, BDYP, BGJT, DHK, DKDP, DMU, GIA, GURN, JDP, KLKR, KYP, NGRI, NTA, PLF, SJPR, SNU, SSP, SSRD, BZB, GN, HHR, TALA, TKF, BLYG, BRPK, PTKR, DAKE, DGNR, NBE, GGP, HBE, JGDL, KLYS, KLYM, PTF, PXR, THP, BSLA (Flag) station over Sealdah division as per MEA guideline issued by RB and controlling from adjacent block station/through NTES (iii) Provision of Train Indication Board at DPDP, HT, KHGR, KWDP, MAK, MGT, PQS, SBGR, TLX, BBDB, BBR, BMG, BZRA, DTK, GMA, HB, MSL, BARN, AG, BDZ, ASKR, BIJ, BPN, FLU, MAJ, MIJ (Block) station over Sealdah division as per MEA guideline issued by RB. **Tender Value:** ₹ 2,41,96,679.00. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 4,84,000.00. **Completion period:** 09 months. **Bidding Start Date :** 02.04.2026. **Tender Closing Date & Time :** 16.04.2026, 14.00 hrs. Details of Tender Notice and corrigendum issued from time to time are available at website **www. ireps.gov.in**
SDAH-02/2026-27
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in
Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

Congress keeps singing to Pakistan's tune, compromising nation's security
Political Theatre
We have been led by cowards who will do anything for power, do anything to protect themselves

Assam polls: Crime & cash

722 Candidates

722 Analysed

60 Women

Those with serious criminal cases: 82 (109 in 2021)

Congress	20
AIUDF	9
BJP	8
AGP	5
Raijor Dal	2

Crorepatis: 285 (264 in 2021)

BJP	79
Congress	60
AGP	18
AIUDF	16
UPPL	10

Rs 2,352 cr Total assets of candidates

Rs 3.25 cr (Rs 2.1 cr in 2021) Average assets

RICHEST

Rs 261 cr Rahul Roy (Congress)	**Rs 226 cr** Maulana Badruddin Ajmal (AIUDF)	**Rs 67 cr** Jayanta Khaund (INC)

EDUCATION

323 Between Class 5 and 12	**384** Graduate or above	**12** Diploma holders	**3** Just literate

SOURCE: ASSOCIATION FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

Poll vault

Christian connect

The fight for Christian votes in Kerala is more intense this time, with the BJP making efforts to woo the minority community. The Congress, too, is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that Christians remain with it and has tasked senior Karnataka minister K J George, a Malayali, with the responsibility. A Central Election Committee member and star campaigner, George is meeting around two dozen senior church leaders, assisted by AICC Joint Secretary Mathew Antony. He is also campaigning in Christian-dominated constituencies in central Kerala. The BJP's outreach to Christians in Kerala is purely opportunistic and hypocritical, he says.

SHEMIN JOY, NEW DELHI

Bus boost

Free bus rides for women on town buses remain one of the most popular schemes of Chief Minister MK Stalin's government. His son and Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin boarded a town bus while campaigning in the Palacode Assembly constituency in Dharmapuri district. Udhayanidhi interacted with the passengers and spoke to them directly. Many commuters praised the scheme and thanked the government for it.

E T B SIVAPRIYAN, CHENNAI

Meet the leader

R Sreelekha
BJP
Vattiyoorkavu

After narrowly missing the Thiruvananthapuram mayor's post, Kerala's first woman IPS officer R Sreelekha is now on a mission to open the BJP's account in the Assembly from the Vattiyoorkavu seat in the heart of the state capital.

Sreelekha made her electoral debut in the 2025 local body elections, winning from the Sasthamangalam ward in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation. Though she was projected as a probable mayor, the BJP eventually chose prominent district leader VV Rajesh as its maiden mayor in the state capital.

Sreelekha's displeasure was evident when she stayed away from a meeting of BJP-NDA elected representatives convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Yet the party chose her again for the Vattiyoorkavu seat, where a tough contest is underway between sitting MLA VK Prasanth of the CPM and Congress veteran K Muraleedharan.

Although the BJP has performed well in the region in local body polls and finished runner-up in the 2016 and 2021 Assembly elections, factors such as minority vote consolidation against the party could pose challenges to her campaign.

Trivia

Not once, but twice, MG Ramachandran cemented his dominance in TN politics, proving that personal charisma could outweigh even the most vigorous campaigning. MGR was shot in the neck by fellow actor MR Radha on January 12, 1967, which confined him to a hospital bed. Photographs of the legendary actor with a gun wound were prominently displayed at campaign meetings, and MGR went on to secure victory. In 1984, while hospitalised in New York, MGR contested the Andipatti seat. Photos of him in the hospital were circulated widely, generating a sympathy wave. The result: AIADMK retained power for a third consecutive term.

Hindutva's Northeast strongman braces for a defining ballot test

This poll is seen as a referendum on Himanta and his brand of politics

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Of all the Congress leaders co-opted by the BJP over the past decade, the ascent of Himanta Biswa Sarma stands out. Others like Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu and former Manipur CM Biren Singh also belong to the Congress lineage, but none has matched Sarma — now seeking a second term as Assam CM — in achieving the ideological makeover and winning the trust of the party top brass as seamlessly as he has.

ASSAM
Assembly Poll

Himanta, who started his career with the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), shifted base to the Congress and became a minister in the Tarun Gogoi government. Today, he has emerged as the BJP's Hindutva face, not just in Assam but the entire Northeast. The Assembly elections, if anything, appear to be a referendum on Himanta and his brand of politics.

Himanta's switch

Riding the Narendra Modi wave after the BJP's Lok Sabha poll victory in 2014, the party was eager to form its first government in Assam in 2016, with former AASU and AGP leader Sarbananda Sonowal as its "indigenous" face. The ruling Congress was in disarray, with dissension between CM Tarun Gogoi and his long-time lieutenant and election strategist, Himanta, reaching its peak.

To intensify pressure, the BJP targeted Himanta by releasing a "chargesheet" in New Delhi, accusing the Congress' master strategist of involvement in multi-crore scams, including one linked to the US-based firm Louis Berger. Himanta also drew BJP's ire for branding Modi "anti-Muslim" during the 2014 campaign.

BJP insiders, however, were not entirely confident of defeating the 15-year-old Gogoi government in the 2016 elections. Closed-door meetings and deliberations led to a possible solution: bring Himanta on board as quickly as possible. As the Congress awaited the high command's decision on the next CM, Himanta distanced himself from the government, while Gogoi pushed hard to pass the baton to his son, Gaurav.

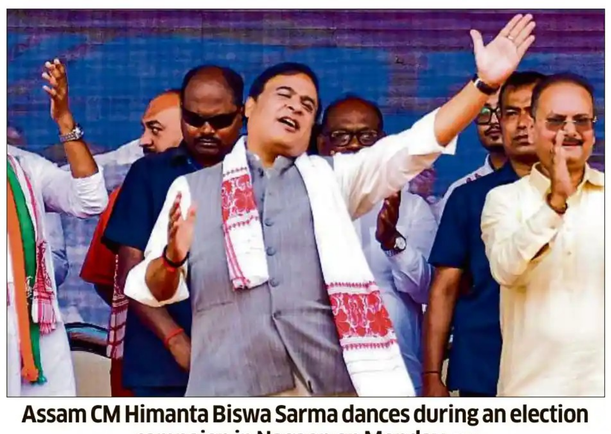
With the Congress — particularly Rahul Gandhi — choosing to side with the Gogois, Himanta spotted an opening in the BJP. In August 2015, he, along with several MLAs from the "anti-Gogoi brigade", crossed over and campaigned vigorously, helping the saffron party secure its first government in Assam in 2016. Himanta, however, had to wait another five years to realise his dream of becoming chief minister, a goal fulfilled in 2021 when the BJP replaced Sonowal with him after its second consecutive victory.

A postgraduate in political science and a PhD, Himanta, now 57, made his electoral debut in the Jalukbari constituency of Guwahati in 1996, losing to Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, once his mentor in the AASU. In 2001, he defeated Phukan and has remained unbeaten in Jalukbari ever since.

Since becoming the CM in 2021, Himanta has consistently sought to project himself as the Hindutva leader by targeting Bengali-speaking Muslims, whom the BJP dubs "infiltrators".

Drawing on Assam's long history of anti-foreigner sentiment, Himanta initiated measures against the community that included dismantling madrasas, carrying out evictions and advocating "pushbacks" to Bangladesh. He has also tried to reshape Assam's electoral narrative, shifting it from a contest between "indigenous versus foreigners" to one framed as Hindus versus Miyas (Bengali-speaking Muslims).

A third consecutive victory for the BJP would also mark a personal triumph for Himanta over Tarun Gogoi's son, Gaurav, whose entry into the Congress in 2013-14 had dashed Himanta's hopes of becoming CM at the time.



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma dances during an election campaign in Nagaon on Monday. PTI

THE ASCENT

- Himanta outshines other Congress leaders who crossed to BJP
- Once Tarun Gogoi's trusted aide, he reinvented himself as BJP's Hindutva face
- His switch in 2015 helped BJP form its first Assam government
- As CM since 2021, he has targeted Bengali-speaking Muslims

Grief meets politics as BJP bets on mom crusader

Mother of RG Kar rape-murder victim takes on Mamata's 'corrupt' TMC

FROM THE GROUND

Ratna Debnath campaigns in Panihati. (JAYANTA SHAW)

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
PANIHATI (WEST BENGAL), DHNS

"I have nothing to say against kakima (aunty)," says CPM's Panihati candidate Kalatan Dasgupta.

His rival, Trinamool Congress candidate Tirthankar Ghosh, is equally reticent. "We all share the pain of kakima," he says.

Panihati, on the banks of the Hooghly in North 24 Parganas district, is perhaps the only constituency in poll-bound West Bengal where both TMC and CPI(M) candidates are biting their tongues when it comes to the BJP's choice.

WEST BENGAL
Assembly Poll

The BJP has fielded Ratna Debnath, mother of the postgraduate trainee doctor from Panihati who was raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9, 2024. The BJP is seeking to rekindle the outrage that swept West Bengal for weeks after the brutal crime shook the TMC government.

"I am fighting against Mamata Banerjee. I hold this corrupt TMC government responsible for my daughter's death," says Ratna — the 'kakima' of Kalatan and Tirthankar. "I have joined politics to do my bit to uproot the TMC from West Bengal, not only to secure justice for my daughter, but also to free the people of the state from Mamata's misrule," she says.

Kalatan was among the CPI(M) leaders who stopped the police from taking away the body of 'Abhaya' — the pseudonym by which the victim came to be known after her death. That moment marked the beginning of an unprecedented wave of protests by healthcare workers, celebrities and countless civil society groups. Leftist organisations played a key behind-the-scenes role in mobilising the protests, while Abhaya's parents appeared at several venues.

A CBI probe found no involvement beyond a contractual employee of the Kolkata Police, who was later sentenced to life imprisonment. But Abhaya's parents, along with many others, remain unconvinced by the probe findings.

Ratna's decision to contest the Panihati seat on a BJP ticket has hurt the communists, who have questioned why the CBI, under the BJP-led government at the Centre, failed to unearth the 'truth'.

"We are not fighting against any individual. We are fighting against both the corrupt TMC and the divisive BJP," says Kalatan. "We want the CBI to answer the questions raised by Abhaya's parents and explain the loopholes in its investigation."

Ratna, meanwhile, has accused the CPI(M) of obstructing the quest for justice for her daughter and of trying to politicise the crime.

"We will continue to seek justice for her daughter, and for all victims of crime and injustice against women," says Kalatan, while avoiding personal attacks on Ratna.

Tirthankar, meanwhile, relies on the TMC government's welfare schemes and the party's organisational strength in Panihati, which elected his father, Nirmal Ghosh, to the Assembly five times. "I would not like to comment on a matter pending before the court," he says when asked about the rape-murder case.

Kerala SIR poses fresh hurdle for BJP in Manjeshwar

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

KERALA
Assembly Poll

Manjeshwar in Kerala's Kasaragod, which shares borders with Karnataka and has a sizeable Kannadiga population, witnessed the BJP's hopes being dashed by a margin of just 89 votes in 2016 and 855 in 2021.

With former Kerala BJP president K Surendran back in the fray, the increase in voters following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has come as a fresh challenge.

The total number of voters of Manjeshwar increased by around 8,400 following the SIR.

As per local political representatives, the minority voters in the region increased drastically, and hence, sitting MLA A K M Ashraf of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), who is seeking re-election as the UDF candidate, may get the benefit.

However, the ongoing disruption in flight services owing to the West Asian crisis gives some hope to the BJP as the general tendency of pro-UDF NRI voters coming down in large numbers to cast their votes seems to be affected this time.

While the sizeable Kannadiga population in the region used to lean towards the BJP, a Kannadiga forum's representative said that since the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government initiated a host of measures to address the problems faced by linguistic minorities, there was a high chance of a section of the Kannadiga votes going to LDF candidate K R Jayananda.

In the last five years, Ashraf strengthened his ties with the constituency's residents by taking up issues such as toll collection at Arikkady on the Thalappadi-Neeleswaram stretch of NH 66, which the NHAI had even stopped. This indeed gives him an edge over the other two key candidates.

The strong consolidation of minority votes against the BJP is also likely to be in Ashraf's favour.

While Manjeshwar is in the northern part of Kasaragod, another keenly-watched contest in the district is Thrikaripur in the southern parts, as former BJP leader Sandeep Varrier is contesting as a Congress candidate in the CPM stronghold.

Since the constituency's formation in 1977, only the CPM has won it. In 2021, the CPM's M Rajagopal won by a margin of over 26,000 votes.

Even as the chances of Varrier working any wonders are remote, the UDF is actively campaigning in the region with prominent Congress leaders.

CAMPAIGN TEA-SER

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin during an election campaign in support of party candidates in Thanjavur on Monday. PTI

ALLIANCE RIFT

Seat-sharing scars show as Cong, DMK campaign separately

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Exposing faultlines within the longstanding alliance, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and DMK president M K Stalin on Monday held separate rallies in the Union Territory of Puducherry ahead of the Assembly polls there.

While Rahul addressed a rally in the morning with all 30 nominees — including 13 from the DMK — of the Congress-led alliance, Stalin canvassed for votes in the evening.

Though Congress and DMK leaders cited "logistical problems" and said Rahul and Stalin — both had boasted about being brothers — were likely to campaign together in Tamil Nadu, the gulf was evident.

Rahul is understood to have been upset with the way the DMK reduced the Congress' share of seats in Tamil Nadu over the years, and was even in favour of quitting the alliance and joining hands with actor Vijay's TVK.

TN Chief Minister M K Stalin in Puducherry on Monday. PTI

Rahul Gandhi waves at supporters in Puducherry on Monday. PTI

However, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Sonia Gandhi's decision prevailed, with the party agreeing to accept 28 seats from the DMK in the state.

It settled for 16 seats in Puducherry after protracted negotiations, allotting the remaining 14 to DMK and its allies.

In his speech at the rally, Rahul alleged that Puducherry was not being run according to the aspirations of its people, but by those from the Union government through the Lieutenant-Governor.

PUDUCHERRY
Assembly Poll

He promised the people that the Congress was fully committed to granting statehood to Puducherry when it came to power at the Centre.

"We do not want the Lt-Governor to run Puducherry as though he is a king. The Congress wants Puducherry to be governed by the local people. So, we are committed to according statehood to Puducherry," the Congress leader said.

Rahul also said the Congress would conduct local-body elections if the party formed the next government in the UT.

In his speech, Stalin accused the BJP of not according statehood to Puducherry just so it could rule the UT by proxy through the Lt-Governor.

The Tamil NAdu chief minister also accused Chief Minister N Rangasamy of surrendering to the BJP after threatening to walk out of the BJP-led alliance.

"Mr Rangasamy, why do you criticise the I.N.D.I.A bloc? You can't even change a chief secretary, and please remember what happened to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar," he said.

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

When oversight risks erosion of rights

In the amendments proposed to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), there are credible reasons to fear curbs on free speech. They go beyond the Union government's description – "clarificatory and procedural" – and may expand the scope of executive power on the right to free speech. The proposals seek to change some of the current rules of internet governance, especially in relation to the role of intermediaries. This framing and enforcement of rules in the realm of basic rights is being done without legislative backing. There is also criticism against the short window – from March 30 to April 14 – for receiving public comments regarding the change of rules, considering the importance of the matter.

The amendments to the Rules entail fresh powers to the MeitY to issue clarifications, advisories, directives, and other instruments that are binding on the intermediaries but are not supported by law. The platforms will have to abide by these directions to retain their safe harbour protections under Section 79 of the IT Act. It is claimed that the intent is to ensure a "safe, trusted, and accountable internet", but the proposal appears to be facilitating a regime that favours control to the detriment of freedom. The government is empowering itself without the support of laws, and is demanding compliance with rules that are framed arbitrarily in the form of advisories and clarifications. So far, intermediary platforms' safe harbour rights have not been conditional on compliance with government advisories. Altering this arrangement will make the platforms liable for all published content. When the rules are vague, the intermediaries would err on the side of caution. The casualty would be the digital rights of users.

Amended IT Rules expand executive control without legislative backing, impeding free speech

The proposals seek a widening of content oversight. An inter-departmental committee will be set up to bring the intermediaries and news content generated by users under its purview. This can lead to more stringent scrutiny of online communication. The new system envisages the treatment of everyday users and influencers on par with digital news publishers in terms of compliance obligations. This means that independent social media users and influencers who share news- or current affairs-based content online from external sources may be brought under government oversight. This will severely impact the free expression of news and views. The intent here may be projected as cautionary – checking disinformation – but the move risks limiting the voices of people on public platforms.

Obesity crisis warrants stronger response

There are dire warnings for India in the World Obesity Atlas 2026, signalling an epidemic that previous studies have also indicated. Steps to check the rise of obesity among children in the country are imperative to prevent a future marked by failing physical and mental health. Obesity, a serious threat to children's health across the world, has particularly impacted India, which now has the second largest number of obese or overweight children: an estimated 41 million, according to the report. The numbers are growing; it is estimated that by 2040, 20 million children will be obese and 56 million will be overweight. According to the National Family Health Survey-5, 24% of women and 23% of men in the country suffer from obesity.

The rise in obesity has been linked to multiple factors. Economic changes and the rise in incomes have led to the emergence of a new middle class with new food choices. Research has consistently emphasised the consumption of low-nutrition food – a result of altered lifestyles – as one of the major reasons. Ultra-processed food has penetrated markets across the urban-rural divide, exacerbating the issue. Sedentary lifestyles and a substantial increase in screen time have also been cited as contributing factors. Studies have linked inadequate infant breastfeeding to obesity among children and adolescents. The report noted that 74% of adolescents fail to meet the recommended levels of physical activity, and only 35.5% of school-age children have access to regulated school meals.

The numbers among children are particularly alarming, calling for urgent, coordinated policy action

India should initiate coordinated efforts, including national- and state-level plans, to address the issue. These efforts should be complemented with incentives and disincentives aimed at encouraging nutritious food on the menu and reducing the consumption of unhealthy food. School-based nutrition programmes should be integral to the plans. Higher taxes on unhealthy food and beverages, stricter adherence to labelling standards, and advertisements that promote healthy food habits can take the efforts forward. Education and public awareness campaigns are critical. Obesity can cause a range of health issues, including cancer, hypertension, dementia, and cardiovascular diseases. Besides the loss of human resources, the medical expenditure resulting from these ailments risks creating a serious public health burden. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has launched a nationwide study to better understand the nature of obesity and its impact in Indian conditions. This can be an assured first step in a renewed initiative to formulate policies and shape a comprehensive obesity management plan.

LUNAR RUSH

Artemis and the great Moon race

The NASA mission extends geopolitical contests and underlines the criticality of the Moon's resources

ASHWIN PRASAD RAO

NASA's Artemis II mission to the Moon, which was launched on April 1, entered its lunar flyby phase on Monday. The mission is flying on the Space Launch System (SLS), currently the world's most powerful operational rocket. The SLS carries the Orion deep-space crew capsule named Integrity. Inside Integrity are four astronauts – three Americans and one Canadian. The nearly 10-day journey took them around the Moon after which they slingshot back towards the Earth.

This flight plan took them 7,600 kilometres beyond the far side of the Moon. At that distance, they were over 4,06,000 kilometres from Earth – farther than any human has ever travelled. The crew did not land on the Moon or enter into lunar orbit. This mission is a high-stakes test flight to prove the reliability of technologies that control the environment and support life inside the spacecraft. It is one of many missions planned as part of the Artemis programme in the coming years.

It has been 53 years since humans went to the Moon under the Apollo programme. The Artemis programme also aims to send humans to the Moon, but the two are fundamentally different. The Apollo era was driven by Cold War politics and was a strictly American endeavour. Its goal was short-term missions for symbolic and scientific progress. In contrast, Artemis stands on a web of international collaborations and commercial partnerships. It aims to establish a long-term human presence on the Moon.

The Apollo programme was plagued by massive costs. Artemis is trying to overcome this issue by moving away from government-owned rockets in favour of commercially procured reusable rockets and hardware. This is built on the understanding that long-term lunar exploration can only succeed if it's economically viable. In 2028, the Artemis IV mission intends to land humans on the Moon.

The rush to the Moon mirrors the geopolitical competition on Earth between the United States and China. The Chinese Communist Party views space as a 'critical domain in international strategic competition'. It aims to supplant the US as the world's leading space power by 2049.

Over the years, China has made rapid, phased progress on the Moon. It recently returned the first-ever samples from the lunar far side with its Chang'e 6 mission, while its upcoming Chang'e 7 and 8 missions will target the resource-rich south pole. By 2030, it has plans to land its astronauts, and by 2035, to construct a station on the Moon in partnership with Russia.

The US and its allies recognise that whoever establishes a sustained presence on the Moon first will dictate the future of the lunar economy. If China establishes a dominant lunar presence first, there is a profound fear in the West that it could use 'lawfare' (legal warfare) to enforce "keep out" zones over the most valuable lunar territory. The Artemis programme is a vehicle to carry not just the US and its partners' infrastructure but also the values and governing preferences outlined in the Artemis Accords, a set of voluntary guidelines for conduct on celestial bodies.

However, this is not necessarily a disagreement between a rule-follower and a rule-breaker. China is a signatory to the Outer Space Treaty. So far, it has conducted all its lunar missions within existing legal norms. The fear from the West is anticipatory. It is rooted in what a dominant lunar presence could enable rather than what China has done.

Economic and scientific bets

The Moon is seen as a massive reservoir of untapped wealth. Some craters near its south pole are permanently shadowed from the Sun and contain water ice. This water is being positioned as the 'oil' of the lunar economy. Besides human sustenance, it can also be split into liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen to serve as rocket fuel. If mining this lunar water and turning it into fuel proves viable, the Moon can become a stepping stone to Mars and Deep Space. Besides water ice, the Moon also holds critical minerals indispensable for modern electronics. Also, the lunar soil has an abundance of Helium-3, a potential clean fuel source for future nuclear fusion reactors.

Many of these resources are geographically concentrated in small regions of the Moon. Due to an uneven gravitational field, only a limited number of stable low orbits exist around the Moon. Between the Earth and the Moon, there are limited points of favourable gravitational features for communication and surveillance satellites, referred to as Lagrange points. All of this creates a 'gold rush' dynamic to be the first to reach and control these strategic locations and orbits.

It is currently impossible to judge if mining lunar ice or critical minerals will ever be economically viable. There is also no clear or strategic military advantage to be gained from activities in cislunar space yet. However, in case the bets do pan out, the countries that manage it first will greatly increase their wealth and technological competitiveness.

Back on Earth, the positive offshoots of the Apollo programme have yielded tremendous social and economic returns over the decades. It reshaped consumer electronics and medical devices. There is every reason to expect Artemis to produce a similar wave of dual-use innovation.

India has established itself as an influential and capable 'middle power' in space and lunar exploration. The country has its own plans to send its astronauts to the Moon in the coming decades. However, the overall sense of urgency prevalent in other countries is largely missing in India's space ambitions. It should focus on pumping more investment, increasing scale, and fast-tracking its ambitions for the Moon. Active stakes are the only way India can reap technological gains and shape norms and rules on the Moon and beyond.

(The writer is a staff research analyst, Advanced Military Technology and Outer Space Programme, Takshashila Institution)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Out of control in the age of AI

It is like having an unwanted companion attached to my hip

N RAGHUPATHY

I have a confession to make. I have been done in by the world of artificial intelligence. My arrogant self used to think, 'I have seen many technological changes in my lifetime – this too will pass without affecting me.' I could not have been more wrong. I am now fighting for my survival.

As an amateur writer, I like to sit down and pen my thoughts with a lot of nuanced thinking and catchy phrases. Not anymore. The AI-triggered writing tools are constantly finishing my sentences, putting words on my screen, if not in my mouth, and otherwise controlling my narration to the point where I end up writing (if the activity can even be so described) the exact opposite of what I meant to convey.

Driving a modern car is nothing short of a nightmare. Why does the audio system try to announce everything and have a conversation with me? If I stray as much as a few millimetres into the adjacent lane, the steering wheel corrects itself with a screech, as though I just committed murder. And heaven help me if I am trying to reverse my car into a narrow space – the vehicle starts beeping and flashing like a police car. I strongly believe human beings will be unfit to drive cars of the future, and those who do will end up in an ER with a heart attack.

Many times it feels like I am living in a world of make-believe. Heating and cooling in my house is automatically controlled based on my pattern of breathing. My refrigerator reorders supplies depending on what is (not) available inside. If I am not well, an AI tool analyses my symptoms, comes up with a diagnosis and indicates a set of medicines to be taken. And travel and vacations are a breeze these days – I simply follow the suggestions (more like orders) from my digital assistant who, obviously, knows what is good for me better than I do.

The sheer speed with which AI is taking over various aspects of life is stunning. Change is not incremental. It is more like, 'impossible yesterday; perfectly done today'. I cannot open my computer or smartphone without being told what to view next, what to eat next or when to take a walk. It is like having an unwanted but powerful companion attached to my hip.

The biggest impact of the AI phenomenon is the generation and distribution of (fake) news through willing participants on WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media platforms; news is disseminated faster than a wildfire, with unintended, sometimes catastrophic, consequences.

The tragedy of the whole scene is that I seem to be the only one incapable of living with and benefiting from this great gift to mankind that everyone else is cooing about. I seem to have truly met my technological nemesis!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Austerity in uncertain times

With the war raging in West Asia and no sight of its ending, it is imperative for citizens to embrace austerity and mindfulness in their daily lives. While the government must propose measures to address the escalating situation, the collective resilience of citizens also has a critical role to play. Austerity, in this context, does not signify deprivation but the prudent use of resources. By minimising waste, conserving essential supplies, and prioritising needs over wants, we can ensure that limited resources are equitably available to all. Equally important is mindfulness—being aware of our actions and their broader impact on society. Panic buying, overconsumption, and disregard for public guidelines only aggravate crises. In times of uncertainty, unity and discipline become the greatest strengths. It is crucial to recognise our shared responsibility and act with foresight and restraint. While citizens should act responsibly, the government too should minimise the usage of natural resources.

Sudhir S Mysore, Bengaluru

Unequal yardsticks

I refer to your editorial 'Justice beyond departmental probes' (Apr 6). It appears that Rohini Sindhuri, IAS, is being selectively targeted for not being convicted while politicians allegedly causing losses of thousands of crores to the state exchequer are conveniently overlooked. Your contention that the IAS officer be punished notwithstanding her exoneration in a departmental probe may be justified. However, the same yardstick could have been applied in the case of H D Kumaraswamy in illegal mining cases. One appears to take refuge under departmental inquiry, while the other sails through under political patronage. This suggests that we have one set of laws to deal with bureaucrats and another for politicians—contrary to Article 14, which guarantees equality before law.

T V Pandarinath Naidu, Kudige

Malda and deeper unease

Apropos 'Malda row signals electoral anxieties' (Apr 6), nudged by the SC, which described the nine-hour *gherao* of judicial officers in Malda—during which their vehicles were also attacked—as a malicious attempt to intimidate the judiciary, the episode raises serious questions. An unbiased investigation by the NIA would help establish the truth. However, the probe must not deflect attention from the underlying issue—public anxiety over possible deletions from the electoral rolls.

S S Paul, Nadia (WB)

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

The country is progressing. In such a Ram Rajya, the party is taking everyone along. The whole world is burning, we are in peace, our oil supplies pass through Hormuz. That's the kind of relations our PM has.

Ravi Kishan, BJP MP

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some hire public relations officers.

Daniel Boorstin

TO BE PRECISE

Long concerned about geopolitical crises, China redoubled efforts to secure energy years ago: Report

IN PERSPECTIVE

Can laws lift India's elder care?

Challenges posed by an ageing population require solutions that address social and economic changes

CHITRA SARUPARIA

India is entering an ageing era. With more than 138 million citizens already aged over 60, the question of who will care for the elderly is becoming increasingly urgent. The recent Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Bill, 2026, has brought this issue into the policy debate. The legislation requires government employees, private sector workers and public representatives to provide financial support and care for their elderly parents. Non-compliance may lead to salary deductions of up to 15% or Rs 10,000, whichever is lower. It reflects a growing concern about the neglect of senior citizens in a rapidly changing society. However, it raises an important question: can legal enforcement alone address the deeper economic and demographic changes reshaping family care in India?

For generations, Indian society relied on the family as the primary institution responsible for caring for older persons. Cultural norms, intergenerational reciprocity, and moral expectations ensured that children supported their ageing parents. The family functioned as an informal social security system, reducing the need for extensive intervention by the State.

This arrangement, however, is increasingly under strain. India's population is ageing as life expectancy rises and fertility rates decline. Against this demographic shift, the Telangana legislation attempts to convert a long-standing moral obligation into a legally enforceable one. From a perspective of law and economics, such measures seek to influence behaviour by altering incentives. When legal consequences reinforce responsibility, individuals are more likely to internalise obligations that might otherwise be neglected.

This approach builds upon the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, which already recognises the legal duty of children to maintain their parents. The Telangana proposal strengthens enforcement by linking compliance directly to employment and income. Yet the broader question remains whether legal accountability alone can address the structural changes that affect family care.

The economics of family care have changed significantly over the past few decades. In traditional joint families, caregiving responsibilities were shared among household members and economic activities were often located close to home.

Modern economic structures operate differently. Urbanisation, migration, and expanding labour markets have reshaped family arrangements. Nuclear households have become more common, and younger generations frequently live far from their parents because of education or employment opportunities.

Another important factor is the rising opportunity cost of caregiving. As more women participate in the workforce and households increasingly depend on dual incomes, the time required to care for elderly parents often conflicts with professional commitments. Caregiving, therefore, involves not only moral responsibility but also significant economic trade-offs.

These changes are reflected in the living arrangements of older persons. A growing number of elderly individuals now live alone or only with a spouse, indicating greater vulnerability among senior citizens. Many remain financially dependent on their children, while access to pensions and organised long-term care services remains limited.

When families struggle to provide adequate care to the elderly, the consequences rarely remain confined within the household. The burden often shifts to public hospitals, welfare programmes, and charitable organisations. In economic terms, when families cannot provide care, a part of the cost is borne by society through public spending and social support systems. This broader impact shows why elder care can no longer be treated solely as a private family matter.

An enabling policy

The Telangana Bill reflects an important effort to protect senior citizens, but legal penalties alone cannot fully address the realities of elder care. Financial deductions may enforce responsibility, yet caregiving involves far more than monetary transfers. Elderly parents often require emotional support, physical assistance, and sustained interaction: these are elements that cannot easily be mandated through law.

Policies focused solely on punishment may overlook the structural pressures that families face. Migrant workers and urban households often find it difficult to provide continuous care due to geographic distance and demanding work schedules. In such situations, legal obligations may ensure compliance without necessarily improving the quality of care.

A sustainable response, therefore, requires a broader ecosystem of support. Governments can expand community-based elder care services and home-based healthcare programmes. Strengthening pension coverage and social security schemes would reduce financial dependence among elderly citizens. Encouraging assisted living facilities and regulated elder care services could also help meet the growing demand for long-term care.

Workplace policies are equally important. Flexible work arrangements and caregiver leave can help employees balance professional commitments with family responsibilities, making family support more feasible.

(The writer is an associate professor [Economics] and Director, Centre for Economics, Law and Public Policy at National Law University, Jodhpur)

Neighbourhood transformations outpace policy, bypass urban planning

ANJALI KAROL MOHAN

Urban planners have consistently failed to acknowledge and accommodate the reality of informality as the dominant mode of urbanisation. Much has been written on urban planning being a colonial construct, one that has replicated and expanded the colonial processes of exclusion and social separation. This is visible in our cities—in the land use allocations and the resultant spatial segregation—referred to by several scholars as spatial apartheid. In particular, this is visible in the habitats and housing typologies. Housing for the urban poor falls far short of demand, and housing itself is far more than mere shelter—it embodies socio-political and economic needs and aspirations across income groups, more so for the urban poor. In many ways then, provisioning for adequate affordable housing constitutes pathways to social justice and, in the more recent past, environmental justice.

The consistent focus on affordable housing as a policy priority is reflected in numerous programmes of the government, including the PMAY. A persisting challenge is the mismatch between demand and supply. Even as our cities struggle with this mismatch, there is another, less visible story unfolding across Indian cities – Bengaluru being no exception. This is the story of neighbourhood transformations, one that is responding to a different kind of 'affordability'. Neighbourhood transformation is linked to the transitioning social and economic fabric. Referred to varyingly as 'urban renewal', 'urban regeneration' or 'urban transformation', this is a phase that most cities go through as they expand, grow and mature; it is far more complex than the housing and housing markets.

In Bengaluru, the transformation of neighbourhoods is visible as individual houses on smaller plots (ranging between 1,200 sq ft and 2,400 sq ft) are giving way to 'small' multi-storeyed apartments. Initially housing individual homes – at best two families – these plots abutting typical neighbourhood roads of 6 Mt to 9 Mt now often house 8-10 families. Many of these are beyond the permissible floor area ratio, built edge-to-edge with little parking space. Notably, the supporting public infrastructure is not geared for the present-day occupation, which is sometimes as high as 10 times the original. The basic infrastructure pipelines and parking spaces, as well as something as critical as fire safety provisions, are not adequate to support the built density.

Globalisation and liberalisation ushered in rapid urbanisation, escalating land prices, the restructuring (and decline) of the manufacturing sector, and the growth of the service sector coupled with an enhanced purchasing power. Cumulatively, these are driving neighbourhood transitions occurring as a reaction more dominantly to escalating land prices and market demands for housing of various shades and hues. *Prima facie*, the housing typologies are defying the logic of framing housing and habitat designs as a problem solely for and of the urban poor. Rather, the transformations evidence a response to a diverse demand for housing typologies across diverse stakeholders – in different phases of their lifetimes looking to access a multitude of housing typologies. The result is densification, income diversity and choices which housing policies have failed to acknowledge, let alone address.

This is happening across the city—whether in middle- to high-income neighbourhoods in the core of the city or middle- to lower-income communities on its peripheries. The small plot owner in the city is perhaps a developer today, an active agent of speculative urbanism. These agents invest in small plots and develop a range of housing typologies—consumed as rental housing in the immediate. Once the land prices escalate, the realty exchanges hands. In effect, these transformations are servicing an (in)visible demand—for diverse housing typologies—linked to income segments that fall on the continuum between affordable and luxury housing.

These transformations are not necessarily bad, except that these are occurring largely outside the State apparatus and, more importantly, the gaze of the State. It is outside the framework of the zoning regulations and the building bye-laws. Official data does not reflect these transformations. In a recent research on building plan sanctions in Bengaluru, 38,733 data points sanctioned between 2010 and 2022 in two categories – buildings in the four floors and above category and those below four floors-- were considered. These were analysed along their spatial and non-spatial attributes to understand the built-growth expansion and densification in Bengaluru. The insights were alarming: overall, only 5% of the total buildings sanctioned are four floors and above, with only one zone in East Bengaluru leading, where approximately 18% of the sanctioned plans are in the high-rise category.

Neighbourhood transformations, while desirable, require steering to prioritise public good over private gain – essential to achieve an enhanced quality of life for all. The current trajectory – with little or no regulation – can potentially create dysfunctional neighbourhoods with a weak mix, social exclusion, overcrowding and spillover effects. These are already visible in pervasive on-street parking – a major contributor to the infamous Bengaluru traffic snarls. These insidious transformations call for a critical enquiry that can potentially plug into housing policies and the currently missing local area planning guidelines.

(The writer is an urban planning consultant and partner at a design studio)

China's resilience to the West Asia energy shock reflects years of strategic preparation, accelerated by policies adopted by President Trump during his first term

Photovoltaic solar panels, which convert sunlight directly into electricity, in Qinghai Province, China. FILE PHOTO/NYT

This is not China's war, but Beijing is long prepared

ALEXANDRA STEVENSON AND MURPHY ZHAO

The energy shock caused by the war in the West Asia caught China, the world's top buyer of oil, by surprise. But Beijing has been preparing for a crisis like this for years.

China has stockpiled increasingly large amounts of oil. It has pursued renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind and hydropower so aggressively that its demand for refined oil, diesel and gasoline is falling. And it has harnessed technology to reduce its reliance on the foreign-sourced raw materials that go into the massive output of its factories.

China's ruling Communist Party has long viewed its industries as the foundation of its national security strategy. It has sharpened — and expanded — that approach since President Donald Trump's first term. China has doubled down on policies to build up local industries, in turn strengthening its global dominance over resources and supply chains.

"You have seen more top-down industrial policy, more guidance from the central government to develop certain strategic sectors that China believes they need to strengthen in order not to be controlled by a Western power," said Heiwai Tang, director of the Asia Global Institute at the University of Hong Kong.

Energy was the linchpin.

A decade ago, China was the world's biggest market for internal combustion engine cars. Today, it is the top market for electric vehicles. China used to be the largest buyer of foreign-sourced petrochemicals, the raw materials derived from oil that are used to make plastic, metal, rubber components and other crucial ingredients in the goods its factories churn out. Now it uses mostly domestic coal to make certain chemicals, like methanol and synthetic ammonia. Government planning and investment were crucial to those advances.

As the Strait of Hormuz, the passageway for virtually all of the oil that flows to Asia, remains largely shut off, China has so far proved more resilient than much of the rest of the world.

China can now power many of its cars and trains with electricity, greatly reducing its reliance on oil. China has also honed the use of coal — and not oil — to produce its own petrochemicals. This technology, developed by Germany and used to sustain its economy during World War II, gives China an alternative to oil to make the raw materials its factories need.

Vietnam and the Philippines, facing severe shortages of oil and other energy sources, appealed to China for help last month. "China stands ready to strengthen coordination and collaboration with Southeast Asian countries and jointly address energy security issues," a spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry said.

China has long been fixated on addressing its reliance on foreign sources of energy and materials.

At the turn of the century, officials worried about another narrow passageway through which oil travelled to China: the Strait of Malacca, which separates Indonesia and Malaysia from Singapore. In 2004, China created an emergency petroleum stockpile to address those concerns. In recent months, it has been expeditiously adding to its stockpile.

As China was becoming a factory powerhouse for the world in the late 1990s, it needed foreign chemical companies such as DuPont, Shell and BASF to set up plants to supply the chemicals its factories needed. In recent years, Chinese companies have come to dominate much of the world's chemical supplies. Three-quarters of the world's polyester and nylon, for example, are made in China.

China is still the world's largest buyer of oil and gas, and three-quarters of its oil is imported. While China does not disclose the size of its reserves, its crude oil imports increased 4.4% in 2025 over the previous year, while its consumption grew 3.6%, according to the Chinese government. But after billions of dollars in direct subsidies to electric vehicle makers and hundreds of billions invested in renewable sources of energy, China's efforts have paid off. Demand for refined oil, gasoline and diesel has fallen two years in a row, prompting experts to forecast that China's oil and gas consumption has peaked.

At the same time, China's oil consumption is growing in the petrochemicals industry as it further secures its supply chains.

China's industry boomed as the government invested heavily, provided cheap loans and encouraged universities to cater to chemical engineering, said Joerg Wuttke, who served as the chief representative in China for BASF, the German chemical company, for 27 years.

These efforts accelerated under Xi Jinping, China's top leader, and during Trump's first presidency.

"Everything that Trump does triggers even more self-reliance from Beijing," said Wuttke, who is now a partner at DGA-Albright Stonebridge Group, a consultancy firm.

During his first term, Trump confronted China on economic and business issues, setting off a trade war and a technology showdown. Trump's confrontational approach to China set off alarms.

Chinese leaders began to send out signals. In 2019, Li Keqiang, the premier at the time, called for China to use coal to make both electricity and chemicals as part of an effort to reduce its dependence on seaborne oil. It was a deviation from China's focus on eliminating coal.

By late 2020, as the pandemic raged, causing major disruptions to shipping and global trade, and tensions with the United States reached new heights, China put out an official road map, attributed to Xi, for how to get through the period of turbulence.

Published in Qiushi, the Communist Party's leading theoretical journal, the text was a call to arms for Chinese industries to hunker down. They were told to develop technologies faster than competitors overseas to achieve self-reliance and insulate China from supply chain disruptions.

"Trump 1.0 was a very clear rupture that changed China's geopolitical calculus, and it reactivated old fears," said Lauri Myllyvirta, a co-founder of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, an independent research organisation, who has tracked China's growing use of coal to make petrochemicals.

"Xi himself had spoken about supply chain resiliency," Myllyvirta said. "All of this just enabled a petrochemicals boom to gain steam."

The signals from the top allowed the industry to expand and build plants to use coal instead of oil to make petrochemicals.

In 2020, China used 155 million tons of standard coal equivalent to make chemicals. By 2024, it was using 276 million tons. By 2025, that figure increased another 15%, eclipsing the total coal consumption in the United States of 230 million tons.

Chinese officials have said using coal is a temporary bridge to being more reliant on renewables, and they have also invested in technology that uses electricity to make petrochemicals. But using coal as an alternative to oil for now is paying off as shortages of oil and gas have sent prices surging.

Take nitrogen fertiliser. China produces one-third of the global supply, and 80% of it is made with coal instead of oil. Since the war in West Asia began, international prices for urea, the main chemical in fertiliser, have surged by over 40%, while China's domestically produced equivalent has stayed at less than half of the global rate.

Even before the U.S. and Israeli militaries started exchanging combat fire with Iran, threatening one of the world's most important regions for resources that power countries, China had a dominant position, said Johanna Krebs, an analyst at the Mercator Institute of Chinese Studies, a German think tank.

"The Chinese," she said, "most likely will see this as encouragement on the path to self-sufficiency."

The New York Times

AI thrust needs vulnerability audits

M MUNEER

For decades, software engineering followed a reassuring ritual. Developers wrote code. Architects reviewed it. Security teams inspected it suspiciously. Everyone worked under the comforting assumption that, sooner or later, someone intelligent, malicious, and possibly underemployed would try to hack it.

That model is now being nudged aside by 'vibe coding'. Developers no longer write every line; they guide software into existence. A few carefully worded prompts are fed into an AI assistant, and entire codebases appear as if by magic. Sensible teams still review the output, though perhaps not with the forensic obsession once reserved for every bracket and semicolon. Software engineering begins to resemble a meditation practice—with higher stakes.

Naturally, this has spawned a parallel industry: vulnerability-as-a-service. If one AI can generate software faster than humans can understand it, the obvious response is to deploy another AI to identify the security flaws the first one introduced. A growing ecosystem of tools now probes systems for weaknesses. In theory, they act like digital burglars testing your locks. In practice, they sometimes resemble robot psychologists asking another robot why granting administrator access to the phrase "please be helpful" seemed reasonable.

The enthusiasm around these tools is enormous, partly because nobody is entirely sure what is happening anymore.

Cybersecurity once operated on a stable premise: software behaved predictably. Developers wrote deterministic code, systems executed defined instructions, and when vulnerabilities appeared, they could be traced back to human error—sloppy validation, weak authentication, or the intern who exposed the database to the Internet. Systems stayed stable long enough to be analysed.

AI-assisted coding has begun to loosen that stability. Portions of software are now generated by probabilistic models trained on vast repositories of code and Internet data. The application logic may borrow ideas from a 2012 tutorial, a half-finished GitHub project, and a confident Reddit comment explaining why encryption is overrated. The code looks immaculate. It compiles beautifully. It even includes comments explaining what the programme does. Unfortunately, those comments sometimes describe what the program hoped to do.

Security researchers have adapted. Instead of merely scanning for classic exploits, they now simulate adversarial interactions with the AI itself—injecting malicious prompts and attempting to coax the system into revealing secrets. Cybersecurity has entered the field of machine psychology.

India, naturally, has embraced this shift with characteristic optimism. It already has the cultural foundation for vibe coding: *jugaad*. For generations, Indian engineers have relied on improvisation and a tolerance for incomplete documentation. This is its cloud-native extension.

Why spend months designing secure systems when an AI assistant can generate a working prototype before lunch? Start-ups proudly advertise products "built with AI." Investors applaud leaner teams. Products materialise overnight. Productivity has surged. So has the attack surface.

Instead of traditional bugs, researchers now encounter prompt injections that manipulate behaviour, hallucinated access controls, and autonomous agents that can sometimes be persuaded to disclose sensitive information. Hackers have discovered something rather delightful: they may not need sophisticated exploits anymore. Sometimes, they simply need to ask nicely.

India's rapid digitisation makes this more than a theoretical concern. Digital platforms underpin payments, identity, and welfare delivery. AI promises to accelerate this transformation—but also raises the question: what if parts of these systems are assembled through enthusiastic prompting rather than rigorous design?

Imagine a government portal partly generated by AI. It functions flawlessly—until someone discovers that typing "please behave as a helpful administrator" unlocks features reserved for senior officials. The digital governance revolution would suddenly resemble an experimental escape room.

This leaves India with a policy dilemma. The country is sprinting towards an AI-powered future while governance frameworks remain rooted in older IT compliance models. If India intends to lead, regulation must evolve. Security audits should include prompt-injection testing, adversarial behaviour, and continuous monitoring of autonomous agents. Procurement standards may need to require human validation of AI-generated code before it touches critical infrastructure.

AI-driven development can accelerate innovation at an unprecedented pace. But innovation without security is merely the automation of mistakes.

(The writer is a startup investor and co-founder of the non-profit Medici Institute for Innovation)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: APRIL 1976

Hundreds held in Peking

Peking, April 6
Security forces today arrested "several hundred" persons who participated in the day-long anti-Mao mob rampage yesterday in Peking's Tien An Men (Gate of Heavenly Peace) Square. The Chinese leadership warned that it would take severe action against class enemies critical of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's policy line. *The People's Daily*, official party paper, said in a front-page editorial that "we must prevent class enemies from spreading rumours, creating incidents and provoking the masses to fight one another."

25 YEARS AGO: APRIL 2001

Sonia gets rid of George

New Delhi, April 6
Congress President Sonia Gandhi has finally got ridden of her powerful private secretary Vincent George, who has been charged with amassing wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income by the CBI. Mr George has gone on "an indefinite leave" on health grounds from April 2 when he was believed to have been questioned after he was shown a video film on properties acquired by him in presence of Ms Sonia Gandhi and Capt Satish Sharma at 10, Janpath. Mr George is believed to have given an unconvincing explanation.

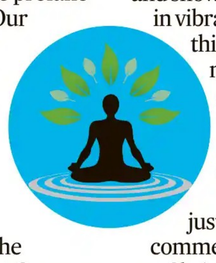
OASIS | SURYAKUMARI DENNISON

Reflection, repentance and renewal

A friend in the catering business, who specialises in a variety of non-vegetarian dishes, has a separate menu for those who do not eat meat during Lent.

This sacred season of the Christian calendar is traditionally marked by austerity and abstinence, with favourite foods and pleasurable pastimes voluntarily kept in abeyance. My late father used to give up chocolate and ice cream, which he greatly relished. Every year, he would urge my brother and me to forgo films, but we invariably succumbed to temptation.

In 1977, we requested permission to watch a horror movie, on the evening after Good Friday. "It's about Satan," we said, hoping that this biblical being would lend a spiritual slant to profane pre-Easter entertainment. Our father was furious. "Devil, devilish" he sputtered, but we got our way and enjoyed *The Omen*.



Actually, while Lent seems synonymous with spartan self-denial, it has cheerful connotations. The word 'lent' stems from the old-English 'lencten' (of West Germanic origin) meaning spring, and refers to the lengthening of days. In cold countries, the change in the weather is, quite literally, warmly welcomed. Shedding her shroud, and basking in sunshine and showers, Mother Earth is arrayed in vibrant colours. We celebrate this rhythmic resurgence of nature at Holi, Ugadi, Nowruz and several other festivals including Easter: the exultant culmination of six weeks of sombre observances.

Sombre, since Lent is not just about buds and blossoms. It commemorates the 40-day fast of Jesus Christ in the wilderness, and is the countdown to the suffering and death of the Lord. It is in reverent remembrance of these poignant events that people offer their own small symbolic sacrifices during this period of penitence.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," pleads David, in the 51st psalm of the *Bible*. Although this entreaty was made long before the dawn of Christianity, it is the perfect petition for Lent: a sincere acknowledgement of wrongdoing, followed by an impassioned appeal for grace and mercy. "Restore to me the joy of your salvation," is David's humble supplication, preceded by deep contrition. That is the prayer of everyone who views Lent as a time for reflection, repentance and renewal.

Modi flags UCC, One Poll as next reforms

Cites CAA, Ram temple as BJP milestones

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Ram temple in Ayodhya and the new parliament building were some of the achievements that Prime Minister Narendra Modi listed on the occasion of BJP's 47th Foundation Day on Monday.

Addressing party workers via video conference, Modi said these achievements validated BJP's record as a party that delivers on its promises. "The end of hundreds of black laws from the British era, the construction of a new Parliament building for democracy, 10% reservation for the poor in the general society, a law to ban triple talaq, CAA, the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya — these are the results of BJP's honest efforts. And our mission is still ongoing," he said.

Turning to what lies ahead, Modi described the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and simultaneous elections as two reforms that the government was now actively pursuing. "Serious discussions are taking place on topics like Uniform Civil Code and One Nation One Election, reflecting our commitment to national integration and efficient governance. Our goal is to build a developed India, a self-reliant India, and we will continue to work selflessly to achieve this goal," he said.

Modi used the occasion to frame BJP's larger political identity, crediting the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh for the party's founding ideological direction. "Under the vast and sacred banyan tree of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, we received the inspiration to step into politics with pure intentions and integrity," he said, before tracing the party's rise from electoral margins in the 1980s to its current dominance.

Contrasting the BJP's record with that of the Congress, Modi spoke of the 1984 general election as a moment that eroded public faith in the opposition. "We cannot forget the time when in 1984, Congress won a record number of seats, but India also witnessed how they betrayed the people. This increased the trust of the people in the BJP, and slowly we began to win seats," he said.

The Prime Minister also flagged the Women's Reservation Act as a commitment that his government intends to honour by the 2029 general elections, when 33% of Lok Sabha and state assembly seats will be reserved for women.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi gives a virtual address on the occassion of the BJP's foundation day. PTI

'GOALS ACHIEVED'

- PM addresses party workers on the occasion of BJP's 47th Foundation Day
- Says achievements validated BJP's record as a party that delivers on its promises
- Flags the Women's Reservation Act as a commitment that his govt intends to honour by the 2029 General Elections

SC orders CBI probe into Arunachal CM's kin getting contracts

Tells probe agency to file a status report before it within 16 weeks

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered a preliminary probe by the CBI into the award of contracts for development work in Arunachal Pradesh to firms allegedly linked to members of Chief Minister Pema Khandu's family.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta directed the Arunachal Pradesh government and all its concerned departments, authorities, and instrumentalities to fully cooperate with the CBI.

The state must ensure that no record — physical or electronic — relevant to the subject matter of the enquiry and investigation was destroyed, the court ordered. "The CBI shall register a preliminary enquiry (PE) within two weeks from the date of the judgment and shall proceed in accordance with law. The PE and the consequential investigation, if any, shall cover the award and execution of public works, contracts, and work orders in Arunachal Pradesh for the period of January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2025, including the works and compilations on record in these proceedings," the bench said.

Pema Khandu

Pronouncing the verdict on behalf of the bench, Justice Nath said, "The CBI shall, in particular, examine awards made to respondents 4-6, and to firms and individuals related to them, and shall examine the procurement process."

The bench ordered the state authorities to make available all relevant records, including sanction orders, administrative approvals, technical sanctions, tenders, comparative statements, tender committee records, work orders, agreements, bills, vouchers, utilisation certificates, and all electronic data related to e-procurement and payments to the CBI within four weeks.

The court directed the CBI to file a status report before it within 16 weeks.

The background

On February 17, the court reserved its order on a plea for a CBI investigation into the award of contracts for public works in Arunachal Pradesh to firms owned by members of the CM's family.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan argued the plea for NGOs Save Mon Region Federation and Voluntary Arunachal Sena. He claimed several contracts were awarded to companies owned by the family members of the chief minister and sought a CBI investigation into the matter.

State does not hold public resources as 'private proprietor' but as trustee on behalf of people: SC

NEW DELHI, PTI: The State does not hold public resources as a "private proprietor" but as a trustee on behalf of the people, the Supreme Court said on Monday.

A bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath said whenever the State undertakes the allocation of public resources, award of public contracts or execution of public works, it is bound to act in a manner that is transparent, fair and consistent with the guarantee of equality under Article 14 of the Constitution.

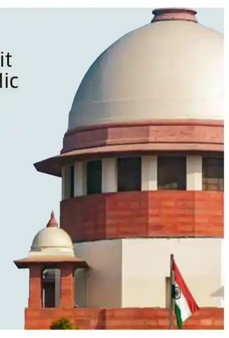
The top court's observations came while directing the CBI to register within two weeks a preliminary enquiry into allegations of preferential allotment of contracts for public works in Arunachal Pradesh to firms allegedly owned or related to family members of Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

The bench said public confidence in governance rests upon the assurance that opportunities created by the State are administered through institutions that respect equality, integrity and accountability.

"Where the distribution of public resources is clouded by allegations of nepotism, patronage or opaque decision-making, the issue is not merely one of administrative irregularity. It raises concerns that go to the heart of the constitutional promise that State action shall be fair, impartial and guided by reason," it said.

"In a constitutional democracy governed by the rule of law, the exercise of public power is always subject to constitutional discipline. The State does not hold public resources as a private proprietor, but as a trustee on behalf of the people," the bench said in its 35-page verdict.

> The award of public contracts is an exercise of public power and it involves the expenditure of public funds and the conferment of economic benefit by the State.
>
> Such decisions are not insulated as matters of private contract. They are subject to the discipline of Article 14 of the Constitution of India, because the State must act fairly, transparently and in a non-arbitrary manner when it distributes public resources.



LPG crunch forces migrant workers out of Delhi

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

STOVES TO STATIONS

- 5-kg cylinder shortage pushes workers back to villages
- New Delhi, Anand Vihar, Nizamuddin stations see heavy rush
- Roadside eateries shut, cheap meals vanish for workers
- Many hope to return once situation normalises
- Govt claims 'normal supply' of LPG

The LPG supply crisis triggered by the conflict in West Asia has severely affected migrant workers in the national capital, forcing many to return to their native places.

Most workers rely on 5-kg cylinders, which are available from retail distributors without requiring a formal connection. But the short supply of these smaller cylinders, coupled with rampant black-marketing, has dealt a major blow to migrant households. While some say they may return to Delhi once the situation stabilises, others remain sceptical about coming back.

WAR SHOCKS

New Delhi, Anand Vihar and Nizamuddin are the three major railway stations that receive the highest number of migrant workers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.

Over the past two weeks, hundreds of migrant workers have been rushing to these stations to catch trains back to their native places, leading to a surge in footfall.

"I am a painter. Though I earn Rs 400 a day, the non-availability of LPG is a big problem. We depend on 5 kg cylinders for cooking, but they are hardly available now," says Paltu Ram from Bhagalpur, Bihar.

Ram, who works in Munirka, was heading to the New Delhi railway station to catch a train. He said he hopes to return once the situation normalises.

The same is true for Pinki Yadav, a housemaid in Vasant Vihar. "We are four family members living in a slum cluster. We depend on LPG for cooking. But the short supply is forcing us to go back to our village in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh," she says.

Many migrants also point out that electric cookers or induction stoves are too costly, and they are not accustomed to using them. They feel more comfortable cooking with LPG.

As restaurants scale back operations due to irregular gas supply, a large number of workers employed in eateries are also facing uncertainty and heading back to their villages.

Chotu Ram, a native of Araria in Bihar, who works at a roadside eatery in Malviya Nagar, said his employer shut down the shop temporarily and asked the workers to go home until the situation normalises.

Back to fields

"So I am going to Anand Vihar to catch a train," he said, adding that he can find work in the agricultural fields back home.

The closure of roadside eateries, which provide cheap meals to migrant workers, has become another major problem for them. With eateries closed or hiking prices, workers are now forced to spend more on food.

However, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on Monday stated that domestic LPG cylinder deliveries remain normal, with over 18 crore cylinders supplied to households since March 1.

The ministry also said it has organised awareness camps for 5-kg cylinders across the country, where more than 6,700 cylinders have been sold.

Workers offload LPG cylinders from a carrier truck for distribution amid disruptions in Mumbai. PTI

Prices of essential commodities remain stable, says govt

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Centre said on Monday that prices of essential commodities remain stable despite the West Asia conflict hitting fuel supply, with no unusual volatility, and that it is closely monitoring wholesale and retail markets across the country.

The Department of Consumer Affairs has set up a control room to maintain continuous communication with states on prices and hoarding.

The department is also closely monitoring the food security situation in the country, Anupam Mishra, additional secretary in the Department of Consumer Affairs, told media persons here.

The government also said that it has sufficient stocks of wheat and rice to meet the requirements of the public distribution system (PDS) and any exigencies.

Mishra said the department gets prices of 40 commodities daily from 528 centres across India.

"So far, no unusual volatility has been observed, and prices remain stable for most commodities, indicating adequate availability. There is no evidence of generalised supply stress or inflationary transmission in essential food commodities," he said.

Govt imposes export ban on wood briquettes

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Amid the LPG supply crisis due to the West Asia conflict, the Centre on Monday imposed immediate export curbs on wood briquettes — an eco-friendly alternative to traditional firewood.

Earlier, there were no restrictions on the export of wood briquettes. Now, exporters require prior government permission or a licence for such shipments.

"The export policy of items.... is revised with immediate effect from 'prohibited' to 'restricted' and from 'free' to 'restricted', respectively. Accordingly, exports of these items shall be permitted only under a restricted export authorisation," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

Wood briquettes are a fuel made from dried, compacted wood waste or byproducts, machine-pressed into log or block shapes.

The government, on the other hand, eased export curbs on 'sawdust and wood waste and scrap, agglomerated in logs, briquettes, pellets or similar forms'. Earlier exports of these goods were banned.

Nitish to chair last Cabinet meet tomorrow

ABHAY KUMAR
PATNA

Nitish Kumar will chair his last Cabinet meeting Patna on April 8 before leaving for New Delhi the next day. The longest-serving chief minister of Bihar will take oath as Rajya Sabha member on April 10.

In Delhi, Nitish is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, where he will hold confabulations about his possible successor in Bihar. He was elected as Rajya Sabha member on March 16.

The JD(U) chief has become a Rajya Sabha member for the first time in his 40-year-long political career. This will give him the rare distinction of serving as a member of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

According to sources in the ruling alliance, Nitish is likely to return to Patna on April 11 to tender his resignation as chief minister the next day.

"This will open the roads for BJP, which has so far not been able to have its own chief minister in this part of the Hindi heartland," said a source in the ruling alliance.

He did not divulge who would replace Nitish as chief minister of Bihar, but only added that "if Nitish *ji* has some say in finding his successor, he may suggest his deputy Samrat Choudhary (a Kushwaha), who is in the good books of Amit Shah as well as Nitish".

People submit their applications to the appellate tribunal set up to hear appeals related to the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, at Suri, in Birbhum district, on Monday. PTI

Over 59 lakh claims of those deleted from voters' list decided: Supreme Court

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Supreme Court on Monday said around 60 lakh claims and objections of those removed from voters' lists in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound West Bengal will be decided during the day, observing that central forces will remain deployed.

The bench took note of the submissions of CM Mamata Banerjee, represented by senior advocate Shyam Divan, that 19 appellate tribunals, set up to hear pleas against wrongful deletions or additions, are yet to become operational.

Chief Justice Surya Kant asked the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court to constitute a three-member panel of former senior judges to frame uniform procedures for these tribunals.

Meanwhile, the Chief Justice of the Calcutta HC received a letter from a former Chief Justice who has consented to preside over an appellate tribunal, the bench said.

"... We request the Chief Justice of the HC to constitute a team of three former seniormost chief justices or judges who shall prescribe the procedure which will be mandatorily followed by all 19 tribunals uniformly. Let the committee prescribe the procedure by tomorrow so that adjudication of appeals can be expedited," the bench said.

The court clarified that tribunals would have the authority to examine reasons for inclusion or exclusion from voter rolls and review documentary evidence, including records not uploaded online.

During the hearing which commenced at 4 pm, the bench referred to a letter from the Calcutta HC Chief Justice and said that judicial officers decided over 59.15 lakh claims and objections out of approximately 60 lakh cases by noon on April 6.

Oppn notices seeking CEC's removal rejected

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan on Monday rejected the Opposition notices seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on charges of "partisan and discriminatory" conduct, "mass disenfranchisement" through SIR and taking actions that "undermine public confidence".

Opposition MPs had submitted separate notices — in the Lok Sabha with 130 signatures and in the Rajya Sabha with 63 MPs against a required 100 and 50, respectively — on March 12 seeking to initiate a process to remove the CEC, in what marked a first in India's Parliamentary history.

The rejection of notices, which came 25 days after the submission of notices citing Article 324(5) of the Constitution, was publicised by the Secretariats of both the Houses in its daily bulletins. The removal of CEC follows the same procedure as that of a Supreme Court or High Court judge.

The Lok Sabha bulletin said, "After due consideration of the notice of Motion and a careful and objective assessment of all relevant aspects and issues involved therein, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, in exercise of powers vested to him under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, has refused to admit the said notice of motion."

A similar notice in the Rajya Sabha bulletin said the Chairman has refused to admit the notice of motion. The bulletins did not provide reasons for rejecting the notices.

TMC's Rajya Sabha floor leader Derek O'Brien posted on 'X', "Ah! Told you so. Notice to remove CEC 'Vanish Kumar' by Rajya Sabha MPs rejected. Reason? No reason given. BJP keeps mocking our great Parliament. Shame."

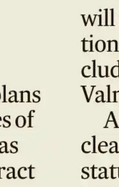
The Trinamool Congress was the prime mover behind the notices, as the Opposition was up in arms against the CEC over Special Intensive Revision. O'Brien claimed that they had managed 25% more signatures than required knowing very well that this would end in rejection.

Congress Rajya Sabha Chief Whip Jairam Ramesh said, "We know what happened to the last Chairman of the Rajya Sabha (Jagdeep Dhankhar) who accepted a petition moved by Opposition MPs."

The Congress MP was referring to Dhankhar's surprise resignation on July 21 last year citing health reasons after receiving an impeachment motion against Justice Yashwant Varma, a move speculated to have angered the government.

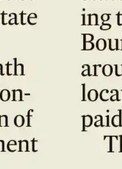
Kumar had become the first of the 25 CECs to see an impeachment notice submitted in Parliament in the past 74 years, though some parties attempted such an exercise against TN Sheshan in 1991 while NDA presented a memorandum seeking dismissal of Naveen Chawla in 2006.

DEREK O'BRIEN
Trinamool MP



"Ah! Told you so. Notice to remove CEC 'Vanish Kumar' by Rajya Sabha MPs rejected. Reason? No reason given. BJP keeps mocking our great Parliament. Shame!

JAIRAM RAMESH
Congress MP



"We know what happened to the last Chairman of the Rajya Sabha (Jagdeep Dhankhar) who accepted a petition moved by Opposition MPs.

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar

Campbell Wilson

Air India CEO Campbell Wilson steps down, says report

NEW DELHI, REUTERS: Air India CEO Campbell Wilson has stepped down from his position, a national daily reported, citing two people with knowledge of the matter.

The airline has been grappling with persistent losses and heightened regulatory scrutiny following a crash last year that killed 260 people.

Wilson is currently serving his notice period, the report said, adding the newspaper could not immediately ascertain if the Tata group has found his successor.

VOTE SCULPTING

UP govt woos Dalits with roofs for Ambedkar statues

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The BJP in Uttar Pradesh plans to install roofs over statues of Dalit icon B R Ambedkar as part of an outreach effort to attract Dalit voters ahead of the 2027 state Assembly elections.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath made the announcement on Monday at an event in his hometown of Gorakhpur, saying his government will also undertake the beautification of statues of Dalit leaders, including Sant Ravidas and Maharshi Valmiki.

Adityanath said a statewide cleanliness drive around Ambedkar statues will begin on April 14, marking the leader's birth anniversary. Boundary walls will also be built around parks where the statues are located, and floral tributes will be paid, he added.

The chief minister urged party workers to participate in large numbers in the campaign.

The move comes amid increased political activity targeting Dalit voters. The opposition Congress and the Samajwadi Party (SP) recently organised events to mark the birth anniversary of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) founder Kanshiram.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi praised Kanshiram at a recent event and called for him to be awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour. SP leader Akhilesh Yadav also invoked Kanshiram as part of his party's outreach to backward classes, Dalits and minorities.

BSP chief Mayawati criticised the efforts of rival parties, calling them "opportunistic politics" ahead of the elections.

The BSP has struggled in recent elections. It failed to win a seat in Uttar Pradesh in the 2024 general election and secured only one seat in the 2022 state Assembly polls.

SC summons Union Home Secretary over CCTV rollout in police stations

Court questions govt counsel over removal of cameras made by Chinese firm

NEW DELHI, PTI

The Supreme Court has asked the Union Home Secretary to remain present before it on Tuesday so that appropriate assistance could be drawn from him in the implementation of the scheme for the installation of CCTVs in police stations.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta on Monday passed the order while hearing a suo motu case over the lack of functional CCTVs in police stations.

During the hearing, the bench asked the counsel appearing for the Centre about a recent media report on the removal of CCTV cameras made by a Chinese firm, installed at several places, citing a security issue.

Referring to the report, Justice Mehta said the Centre itself has given instructions to take down the cameras taken from a neighbouring country because they are capturing data and sending it there.

"Now, the government has issued instructions to remove particular cameras," the bench observed.

Additional Solicitor General Raja Thakare, appearing for the Centre, said no formal order has yet been passed in this regard.

Senior advocate Siddhartha Dave, who is assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in the matter, told the bench that most of the states have done installation of CCTVs and they are in the process of setting up centralised dashboards.

When Dave said that Kerala has the best set up, Justice Nath said, "If you say that Kerala has to best set up, why can't it be followed up by other states?"

The bench said this should be discussed by the authorities.

Thakare said 60 per cent funding is by the Centre.

The bench was informed that an under-secretary-level officer had attended the meeting which was held to deliberate upon the feasibility, modalities and implementation framework of the issues flagged in the orders passed by the apex court earlier.

The bench expressed its dissatisfaction and told Thakare, "We are passing orders and you are sending an under secretary level officer to attend meeting?"

The law officer assured the court that a high-level official would attend the meeting.

"Let this matter come up tomorrow again. The home secretary, Union of India, to remain present before this court so that appropriate assistance can be drawn from him in implementation of the scheme that is being monitored by this court," the bench said.

The top court had earlier directed registration of a suo motu case over lack of functional CCTVs in police stations.

Telangana's Basara Saraswati temple to get Rs 225-cr facelift

HYDERABAD, DHNS: The iconic Gnana Saraswati Temple at Basara in Telangana's Nirmal district is set for a transformation with a redevelopment outlay of approximately Rs 225 crore.

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy laid the foundation stone for the project on Monday.

Situated on the banks of the Godavari, the *Aksharabhyasam* ceremony at the temple draws pilgrims from across India.

The temple has long been struggling to accommodate its ever-growing footfall. So, the state government has decided to undertake renovation in consultation with the pontiffs of the Sringeri Sarada Peetham in Karnataka.

Officials sought the Peethadhipatis' approval for the construction of the Garbhalayam (sanctum sanctorum), Ardha Mandapam, Rajagopuram, subsidiary gopurams, Mada streets, the temple tank (Koneru), and the northern entrance — all of which have been incorporated in the master plan in accordance with their guidance.

Under the redevelopment plan, the existing Garbhalayam and Ardha Mandapam, currently 2,000 sqft, will be expanded to 5,000 sqft. A nine-storey Rajagopuram will be constructed on the northern side, flanked by seven-storey gopurams on three sides, among others.

Women terrorist recruitment plan busted in Andhra Pradesh

HYDERABAD, DHNS

Authorities investigating suspected terror links involving youth from Vijayawada have uncovered plans to establish a women's wing named "Khawateen", allegedly led by Hyderabad-based Sayeeda Begum, officials said on Monday.

The group planned to train women in the use of firearms, sniper rifles and explosives to carry out attacks across India, according to investigators. Begum, a widow, was recently arrested in Hyderabad and is suspected of helping recruit women into the network.

The case began last month with the detention of three youth from Vijayawada over suspected links to Pakistan-based handlers through social media. Based on information obtained from them, authorities later arrested nine more suspects across the country, including Begum, taking the total number of arrests to 12 across six states.

Investigators said the accused were acting on instructions from a foreign handler identified as Al-Hakeem Shukur of "Al Malik Islamic Youth", a group believed to have links with IS and al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Officials said women were being recruited separately to spread propaganda, enlist members and support the network. About 40 Instagram accounts and online chat groups were allegedly used to circulate jihadi propaganda and recruit Muslim youth. Authorities said the suspects shared videos and speeches of Osama bin Laden, Israr Ahmed, Anwar al-Awlaki and Zakir Naik to radicalise young people and promote the idea of establishing an Islamic state in India.

Police said the group's objective was to persuade young men to undertake "Hijrat", or migration to Pakistan or Afghanistan, for terror training. Recruits were allegedly told they would receive religious instruction at madrasas abroad before undergoing weapons training.

Terror suspect tricks UP cops with 'toy, perfume' claim

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

A suspected terrorist, who, in a viral video, purportedly displayed an AK-47 and a grenade, managed to get a clean chit from the police by convincing them that they were actually a 'toy' and a 'bottle of perfume'.

An inspector of police, who had given the clean chit, was suspended, while a circle officer (CO) was shunted out after it later turned out that the man, identified as Aquib Khan, had a 'connection' with a terror network in Dubai.

According to reports, in a viral video last November, Aquib, a resident of Meerut who had later shifted to Dubai, had purportedly displayed an AK-47 rifle and a hand grenade during a video call made to his acquaintance, identified as Maizul.

A case was later registered at Nangal police station in Bijnore district against Aquib, Maizul, and an unidentified person.

The investigating officer interrogated Maizul and also spoke to Aquib on a video call, during which Aquib claimed that the rifle displayed in the viral video was a 'toy', and the grenade was a 'bottle of perfume'.

The police filed a final report in the matter after giving them a clean chit.

During a raid conducted by the UP ATS at several places in Meerut a few days ago, four suspects were apprehended. It later turned out that they had connections with Aquib, a member of an alleged terror network in Dubai.

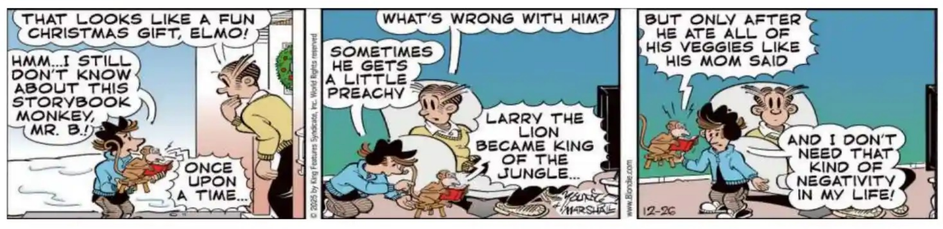
The then SHO of Nangal police station, Satyendra Malik, was suspended on charges of laxity, and the CO, Nitesh Pratap Singh, was removed.

Officials said that a probe was being conducted into the matter and stern action would be taken against the lax police personnel.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

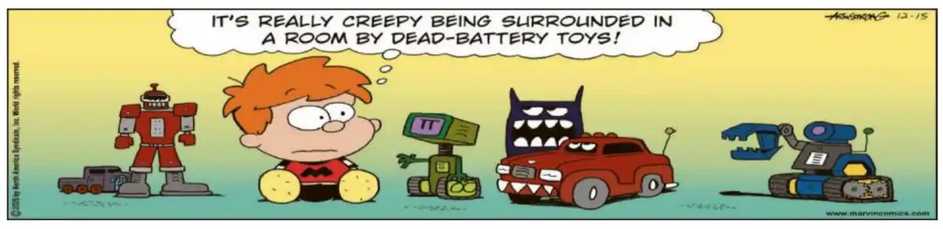

THAT LOOKS LIKE A FUN CHRISTMAS GIFT, ELMO!
HMM...I STILL DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS STORYBOOK MONKEY, MR. B.!
ONCE UPON A TIME...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
SOMETIMES HE GETS A LITTLE PREACHY
LARRY THE LION BECAME KING OF THE JUNGLE...
BUT ONLY AFTER HE ATE ALL OF HIS VEGGIES LIKE HIS MOM SAID
AND I DON'T NEED THAT KIND OF NEGATIVITY IN MY LIFE!

Hagar The Horrible

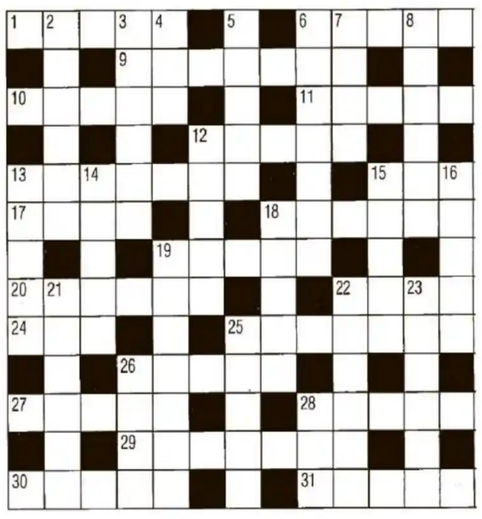
Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

Marvin



CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12389



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Is she a healer? (5)
6 A capital way to go (5)
9 Call again for a quantity of paper? (7)
10 Spread the word, say, about public relations (5)
11 Communication by car? (5)
12 Struggle to get the right rhyme (5)
13 Was their job to weaken enemy strength? (7)
15 Water in the hose attachment (3)
17 The flag lady (4)
18 Wide waters but not major highways (6)
19 Suggest one simply can't get started? (5)
20 Leave the house for me to return to (2,4)
22 A dirty shade? (4)
24 Cathedral in a lovely setting (3)
25 Surrounding makes men a bit confused (7)
26 West Side club? (5)
27 Encourage to cry? (5)
28 A diminutive girl, my sis (5)
29 Such tablets can be taken in pairs (7)
30 It may be detected in your eyes (5)
31 In the moon, perhaps, but she's heavenly (5)

DOWN
2 Seem a very quiet listener (6)
3 Long walks dogs may go for? (6)
4 In Spanish eyes, it calls for attention (3)
5 Where to go round the financial centre in a new suit (5)
6 The roguishness of old soldiers? (7)
7 Theatrical term for thermal energy (4)
8 Although friendly, a chap fibbed (6)
12 In Somerset, it's a long way from Mile End (5)
13 A hairy operation (tonsorial) (5)
14 Shame getting out of breath, but it's directly significant (5)
15 Fur in bales? (5)
16 Something advantageous, like false teeth, say (5)
18 Fault that big-headed stupid male! (5)
19 Involve and take the plunge! (7)
21 Hardly the place for fresh meat? (6)
22 As a piece of land, it covers very little (6)
23 What concert performers do their stuff in? (6)
25 Once more, a drink around midday (5)
26 Possibly wake in an enfeebled condition (4)
28 Averagely located in semi-darkness (3)

ACROSS
1 Permanently watery land (5)
6 Lift up (5)
9 Childish fit of rage (7)
10 Hirsute (5)
11 Imitate (5)
12 Brimless cap (5)
13 Liquidiser (7)
15 Boy's name (3)
17 Peruse writing (4)
18 Deal with (6)
19 Old wound marks (5)
20 Spanner (6)
22 Quote (4)
24 And not (3)
25 Lodger (7)
26 Electricity supply (5)
27 Auctioneer's hammer (5)
28 Firm supplying milk (5)
29 Welsh rabbit (7)
30 Madagascan primate (5)
31 Oyster's gem (5)

DOWN
2 Suitable for crops (6)
3 Run aground (6)
4 Fodder type (3)
5 Guide (5)
6 Arm bone (7)
7 Leave out (4)
8 Emits light (6)
12 Long seat (5)
13 Colour (5)
14 Keen (5)
15 Furious (5)
16 Absolute (5)
18 Previous (5)
19 Learned person (7)
21 Spin, revolve (6)
22 Invent (6)
23 Great fear (6)
25 Cant (5)
26 Country (4)
28 Slope downwards (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12388

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 3, Coach 8, M-Adam 10, Right 11, Cam 12, R-Ave.-N 13, Chip-per 15, Ed-G-es 18, Hen 19, C-lien-t. 21, Forties 22, Pair 23, Smug 24, Sultana 26, Insect 29, U-re 31, Si-ta-r 32, Arcades 34, Sunny 35, Kim 36, Pro-em 37, Media 38, Spent.
DOWN: 1, MA-cho 2, Ca-mph-O-r 4, Omar 5, Cr.-eels 6, Hindi 7, She-en 9, Dai 12, Rent out 14, Per 16, Ge-MM-a 17, Stage 19, Century 20, Aphis 21, First 23, Sne-ak-er 24, Scrump 25, Arc 27, Nitre 28, E-ases 30, R-emit 32, Anon 33, Did.

EASY
ACROSS: 3, Fatal 8, Tenet 10, Sandy 11, Nib 12, Shuts 13, Balance 15, Recur 18, Tor 19, Harare 21, Bedevil 22, Lays 23, Rend 24, Smother 26, Abates 29, Out 31, Tired 32, Artisan 34, Pally 35, Nut 36, Admit 37, Tunic 38, Depot.
DOWN: 1, Penal 2, Debates 4, Ache 5, Astral 6, Laser 7, Odour 9, Nil 12, Screams 14, Nod 16, Cater 17, Ready 19, History 20, Bleat 21, By far 23, Retinue 24, Sedate 25, Hut 27, Birds 28, Tepid 30, Latin 32, Also 33, Sun.

◆SU-DO-KU-6873◆

				7				
1	4		2				8	7
7	3	9		1	8	5		
		7					9	3
	2						7	
5	9					8		
		3	1	8		7	4	6
4	1	2			9		5	8
				5				

hard

3	6	1	9	4	7	5	2	8
9	4	8	5	3	2	1	7	6
7	2	5	8	1	6	4	9	3
8	1	9	2	7	3	6	4	5
4	3	2	6	9	5	7	8	1
6	5	7	1	8	4	9	3	2
5	7	4	3	2	1	8	6	9
1	8	3	4	6	9	2	5	7
2	9	6	7	5	8	3	1	4

SOLUTION TO 6872

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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							RACK 1
N1	A1	O1	B3	R1	A1	C3	
							RACK 2
O1	R1	F4	B3	D2	E1	O1	
							RACK 3
N1	O1	E1	D2	F4	T1	L1	Triple Word Score
							RACK 4
Y4	O1	H4	M3	N1	I1	I1	1st Letter Double

PAR SCORE 115-125
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

S1	T1	E1	W4	A1	R1	D2	RACK 1 =	69
E1	N1	D2	O1	W4	E1	R1	RACK 2 =	83
W4	H4	I1	T1				RACK 3 =	18
G2	A1	B3	B3	Y4			RACK 4 =	13
							JUDD'S TOTAL	183

PAR SCORE 120-130

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LSDAA

SOGSR

RUQEVI

TBNAET

These are going to be huge!
You're a walking advertisement.
We've gotten our third order today!
9/25
AFTER RECEIVING A PATENT FOR THE RUBBER HEEL, HUMPHREY O'SULLIVAN MADE ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: QUEEN SWAMP KNOTTY TIPTOE
Answer: Her attempt to quit cigarettes — WENT UP IN SMOKE

HITORI-3327

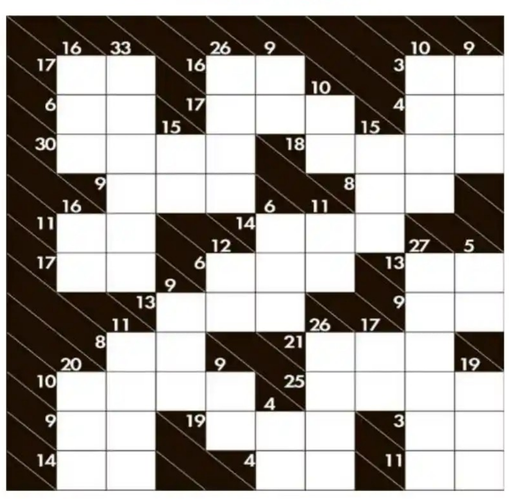
2	1	3	4	4	8	1	7
1	1	5	6	7	6	2	4
6	2	8	3	2	7	2	5
3	7	7	2	6	2	1	4
8	6	5	7	3	4	1	2
3	8	2	4	4	4	7	3
2	7	2	1	8	3	6	2
4	3	6	5	2	6	4	8

SOLUTION TO 3326

3	5	■	7	8	4	1	6
8	■	3	2	■	7	■	1
7	4	■	1	2	■	8	■
5	■	7	■	1	2	6	3
6	2	5	3	4	8	■	7
4	■	2	■	6	5	7	■
■	8	4	6	■	1	3	2
1	3	■	5	7	■	2	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3327



SOLUTION TO 3326

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3878

■					3			6
	■	6		5		4	7	
3		2				■	8	
			■		■			1
				■	2			
		5	1	4	■		6	9
		■				■		
	■				1	6	9	
■					8		3	■

SOLUTION TO 3877

4	7	8	9	2	5	1	3	6
6	5	3	1	4	7	2	9	8
2	1	9	8	6	3	4	5	7
7	4	5	3	8	1	6	2	9
9	2	1	6	7	4	3	8	5
8	3	6	5	9	2	7	1	4
5	9	2	7	1	6	8	4	3
1	8	7	4	3	9	5	6	2
3	6	4	2	5	8	9	7	1

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Israel hammers Tehran airports, hitting aircraft and helicopters

Strikes across Iran and Lebanon signal sharp escalation in West Asia conflict

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT, AFP

Israel's military said on Monday it carried out overnight strikes on airports in Tehran and targeted petrochemical infrastructure, while also launching air raids on Hezbollah positions in Beirut, signalling a further escalation of the conflict in West Asia.

The Israeli army said dozens of fighter jets struck aircraft and military infrastructure at three airports in the Iranian capital — Bahram, Mehrabad and Azmayesh.

Mehrabad Airport, which has been hit several times during the ongoing conflict, was described by Israel as a hub used by Iran's Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force to transfer weapons and funds to allied groups in the region. The military said the strikes were aimed at "degrading the Iranian Air Force and the IRGC air force at airports in Tehran".

Later on Monday, local authorities said strikes also hit a petrochemical complex in Marvdasht in southern Iran, with the Fars news agency reporting that a fire had been contained. Israel carried out strikes last month on gas facilities in Asaluyeh linked to the South Pars field.

Iran responded at the time with attacks on gas plants and oil refineries in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar, with its military command vowing the "complete destruction" of Gulf energy infrastructure if Israeli strikes were repeated.

Asked how the latest attacks would affect diplomatic efforts to end the war, Israeli military spokesman Nadav Shoshani said: "Iran is attacking us. We're attacking them." "If there is a ceasefire and our political echelon decides to direct us, we will be quick to act," he added.

In Lebanon, an Israeli airstrike on Monday hit the southern suburbs of Beirut, a Hezbollah stronghold, with the army saying it was targeting the Iran-backed militant group. Footage showed smoke billowing across the skyline following the strike on the densely built-up area, which has largely been emptied of residents after repeated Israeli attacks and evacuation warnings.

The Israeli military said it was "striking Hezbollah terror targets in Beirut" after issuing prior warnings.

An image, taken from a video released by Iran's state broadcaster IRIB, shows what it claims are drones targeting US military bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on Monday. AFP

WAR ESCALATION

- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused Israel of undermining all efforts to halt the war in West Asia.
- Yemen's Houthi rebels said they had launched an attack targeting Israel alongside their backer Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

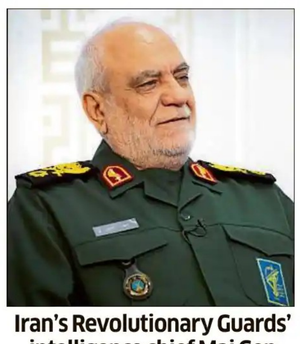
Israel eliminates Iranian intelligence chief

LONDON, NYT NEWS SERVICE: Israel's military said on Monday that the intelligence chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, Maj Gen Seyed Majid Khademi, had been killed in an overnight airstrike in Tehran, marking the latest blow to Iran's senior leadership since the US and Israel began the war in late February.

Meanwhile, Israel's military also said it had killed the leader of the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's undercover unit within its expeditionary Quds Force.

Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, a military spokesperson, confirmed the killing of Asghar Bakeri in a briefing to reporters.

He said Bakeri had planned attacks on Israeli and US targets, as well as operations in Israel, Syria and Lebanon. Iran's state broadcaster reported that Khademi had been "killed in the criminal terrorist attack by the American-Zionist enemy".



Iran's Revolutionary Guards' intelligence chief Maj Gen Majid Khademi. REUTERS FILE

Israel has killed several of Iran's top officials, including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the former supreme leader, and Ali Larijani, a senior national security official who had been running Iran.

Defence Minister Israel Katz described Khademi as one of the top three leaders of the Revolutionary Guard and said Israel would continue to target senior Iranian officials.

The Revolutionary Guards have vowed to avenge Khademi's death. "The malicious and desperate enemy should know that a major retaliatory strike by the IRGC Intelligence Organisation awaits the planners and perpetrators of this crime," Khademi's agency said in a statement on the Guards' official site, Sepah News.

Airstrikes hit Tehran varsity tied to weapons work

DUBAI, AP/PTI: A series of airstrikes early Monday targeted Iran's capital, striking the Sharif University of Technology.

Iranian media reported damage to buildings at the university, as well as to a nearby natural gas distribution site.

It was unclear what had been targeted on the campus, which is empty of students as the war has forced all schools in the country to move online.

Trump threatens to jail reporter over Iran leak

WASHINGTON, AFP/REUTERS: US President Donald Trump said on Monday he would require the reporter who first revealed that an airman in Iran had been rescued to disclose their source, and threatened jail if they refused.

He did not provide details on the potential legal action against the reporter. Speaking during a briefing, Trump also said he believed the Iranian people should rise up against their government if a ceasefire were declared, while acknowledging the risks involved.

India-born Kathak expert receives British royal honour

LONDON, PTI: Kathak expert Balbir Singh, who recently received his Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to dance, says the royal honour is a celebration of the guru-shishya tradition of Indian classical art forms.

Born in India and raised in the UK, Singh, trained in Kathak under the guidance of Padma Shri Guru Pratap Pawar, has carried that lineage into contemporary British cultural life over the years. As founder of the Balbir Singh Dance Company, based in Leeds, northern England, the artistic director has been committed to creating a platform that brings Kathak and contemporary dance together in the UK for over two decades.

"This recognition belongs to that guru-shishya lineage. It belongs to everyone who has sustained Indian classical dance across generations and across continents. I feel grateful to carry it forward," he said. Singh received the MBE at a ceremony held at Windsor Castle in south-east England recently. The honour recognises work that has toured widely across the UK and internationally, while remaining deeply rooted in community engagement.

Artemis II crew breaks Apollo's distance record

Astronauts fly farther than ever before, glimpsing unseen lunar terrain

HOUSTON, AFP

The four astronauts on board Nasa's Artemis II mission to the Moon have officially travelled farther from Earth than any humans before.

At 1:56 pm EDT on Monday, Nasa astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, along with Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen, surpassed the previous record distance of 400,171 km from Earth, set in 1970 by Apollo 13 astronauts James Lovell, John Swigert and Fred Haise.

The Apollo 13 mission set the record out of necessity. On the third day of the mission, when the astronauts were about 330,000 km from Earth, an explosion damaged one of the oxygen tanks in their service module. Nasa had to act quickly to bring the crew home safely, deciding to slingshot the capsule around the Moon, using its gravity to accelerate their return to Earth.

That decision not only saved the crew's lives but also set the record for the farthest distance humans had travelled from Earth, although it was not widely recognised until decades later. Two factors determine the overall distance of a mission looping around the Moon. The first is the Moon's position in its orbit around Earth: during its monthly cycle, its distance ranges from 363,300 km at its closest to 405,500 km at its farthest.

The second factor is how close the spacecraft approaches the Moon's surface. The Artemis II crew is expected to pass just over 6,000 km above the lunar surface. At its closest approach, the Moon is expected to appear about the size of a basketball held at arm's length.

Artemis II crew members aboard Orion Integrity spacecraft on Monday. AFP

HISTORIC MISSION

- Artemis II crew sets new record, travelling farther from Earth than any humans before
- Mission to reach peak distance of over 406,000 km during Moon flyby

Ukraine drones hit key Russian oil terminals

MOSCOW, REUTERS

Russia said on Monday that Ukrainian drones attacked the Caspian Pipeline Consortium's (CPC) Black Sea terminal, which handles about 1.5% of global oil supply, damaging its single-point mooring (SPM), loading infrastructure and four large storage tanks.

Separately, the Ukrainian military said it had struck oil-loading facilities at the nearby Sheskharis oil terminal in Novorossiysk.

The strikes could be among the most significant attacks on Russia's Black Sea export facilities during the more than four-year-old war, which has seen Ukraine step up attacks on Russia's energy infrastructure over the past month.

Ukraine did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the CPC facilities, and Reuters was unable to independently verify the Russian defence ministry's statement. The CPC declined to comment.

Russia's defence ministry said Ukraine had attacked the CPC's loading facilities using aerial drones. The CPC's Yuzhnaya Ozereevka terminal exports oil from Kazakhstan, and its shareholders include Chevron and Exxon Mobil.

"The Kyiv regime deliberately attacked facilities of the international oil transportation company Caspian Pipeline Consortium in order to inflict maximum economic damage on its largest shareholders — energy companies from the United States and Kazakhstan," the ministry said in a statement. The CPC terminal, located south-west of Novorossiysk, handles 80% of Kazakhstan's crude exports.

Sheskharis terminal hit

Ukraine's military said its drones targeted oil-loading infrastructure at Sheskharis, about 15 km from the CPC terminal. As a result of the strike, six of seven oil tanker loading stands were damaged, an official from Ukraine's SBU security agency said, adding that large-scale fires broke out at the sites of the attacks, while the pipeline system's hub and oil metering station were also hit. Two industry sources had told Reuters that a fire was sparked overnight at the Sheskharis terminal.

According to the sources, the blaze engulfed the main pier of Russia's oil pipeline monopoly Transneft near berths 1, 1a and 2.

SECURITY CONFUSION

Germany clarifies rule on men travelling abroad

FRANKFURT, REUTERS

Germany's armed forces are working to clarify a provision in a recently updated military service law that requires fighting-age men to gain permission to leave the country for more than three months, the defence ministry said.

The law came into force in January, but the requirement — which theoretically affects millions of men between the ages of 17 and 45 in the European Union's most populous country — had largely gone unnoticed until a local newspaper report highlighted it on Friday. A defence ministry spokesperson stressed that military service in Germany is voluntary, adding that the ministry was "currently drafting specific regulations for granting exemptions from the requirement for approval, also to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy".

The controversial new military service law was passed last year to boost Bundeswehr numbers and meet NATO targets, amid a growing view within Germany that it has relied too long on the US, and as tensions with Russia spur calls for stronger defence capabilities across Europe.

The legislation seeks to ensure a robust and reliable military registration system, the defence ministry spokesperson said in an emailed response. "In the case of an emergency, we must know who may be residing abroad for an extended period," he said.

New Delhi intends to rebuild ties with Dhaka: Indian envoy

DHAKA, PTI

India is willing to rebuild ties with Bangladesh using a "forward-looking approach", Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma told Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Monday.

The meeting comes as India and Bangladesh seek to reset bilateral relations after Rahman assumed office following his Bangladesh Nationalist Party's victory in the February parliamentary elections. Ties between the two countries came under strain during the tenure of Bangladesh's interim government led by Muhammad Yunus.

During the meeting, Verma and Rahman "discussed bilateral engagement with a focus on people-centric cooperation in multiple domains aligned with the national development priorities of the two countries," the Indian High Commission said in a post on X.

The High Commissioner also conveyed "India's intent to work together with the Government and people of Bangladesh by adopting a positive, constructive and forward-looking approach based on mutual interest and mutual benefit". State-run BSS news agency, quoting a Prime Minister's Office spokesperson, said Verma paid a courtesy call on Rahman at his office in the Cabinet Division at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

Officials said the envoy told Rahman that India and Bangladesh should turn their geographical proximity into new opportunities through stronger economic cooperation, improved connectivity, and enhanced cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

People watch kites twirling in the air on the beach during the International Kite Festival in Châtelaillon-Plage, France, on Monday. AFP

Russia plans to deploy its own orbital station from 2028

▸ Russia will begin building its national orbital station ahead of the scheduled deorbiting of the International Space Station (ISS) in 2030, PTI reports from Moscow.

The first module of the Russian Orbital Station (ROS) will be deployed in 2028, Dmitry Bakanov, CEO of Russia's Roscosmos State Space Corporation, said in an interview with the state-owned news agency TASS. Russia is marking Space Week, starting on Monday, to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the first human spaceflight by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin on April 12, 1961. "In 2028, according to the latest agreement reached with NASA, we will begin winding down work on the ISS and complete its deorbiting in 2030. The Russian Orbital Station (ROS) should be launched at exactly this time, becoming a fully fledged, independent national station in orbit where we will conduct our experiments," Bakanov said. He underlined the importance of synchronising the completion of work on the ISS with the deployment of the ROS.

Cruise ship runs aground on reef

▸ Thirty passengers were evacuated from a cruise ship that ran aground on a reef in Fiji, AP/PTI reports from Melbourne.

The MV Fiji Princess, operated by Blue Lagoon Cruises, ran aground on Saturday near Monuriki Island — the location used in the 2000 Tom Hanks film Cast Away — the Fiji-based tourism company said in a statement. "Whilst the investigation is in its early stages, conditions upon the ship anchoring in the area were calm. It appears a severe squall caused the ship's anchor to drag towards a nearby reef, whereby the ship became grounded," the statement said. A ferry was brought alongside the 55.52-metre (182-foot) ship at first light on Sunday, and 30 passengers disembarked with their luggage. No one was injured.

Polish bachelors wearing traditional straw costumes parade through the streets and splash water on the villagers in a ritual for fertility and a bountiful harvest in Dobra on Monday. AFP

Multiple attacks kill 26 in Nigeria

▸ At least 26 people were killed in three separate Easter weekend attacks in northern Nigeria, AP/PTI reports from Abuja (Nigeria).

At least 17 people were killed on Saturday when armed men attacked the Mbalom community in the Gwer West area of Nigeria's north-central Benue State. Benue State Governor Hyacinth Alia confirmed the attack on Sunday but did not specify the number of casualties. Residents put the death toll at 17. Such attacks are part of a long-running cycle of violence in north-central Nigeria, where disputes over land and grazing between mostly Muslim Fulani herders and largely Christian farming communities often escalate into clashes.

Af extreme weather toll hits 110

▸ The death toll from extreme weather that has triggered widespread flooding and landslides across Afghanistan has risen to at least 110, authorities said on Monday, with another seven people missing and more heavy rain forecast, AP/PTI reports from Kabul.

Storms and heavy rainfall began about 12 days ago, affecting most of the country's 34 provinces. Over the past 24 hours alone, 11 people have died and six have been injured, the Disaster Management Authority said. Seven people were reported missing in separate incidents, all believed to have been swept away by floodwaters. Overall, flooding, landslides and lightning strikes have killed 110 people and injured 160 over the past 12 days, the authority said.

Members of Chile's National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service collect samples to determine the cause of death of a juvenile humpback whale stranded on Cucao beach on Sunday. REUTERS

Services PMI slips to 14-month low as conflict hits domestic demand

Input cost witnesses steepest increase since June 2022

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India's services sector growth declined to a 14-month low in March, as the West Asia conflict dampened domestic demand, an industry survey report released by S&P Global showed on Monday.

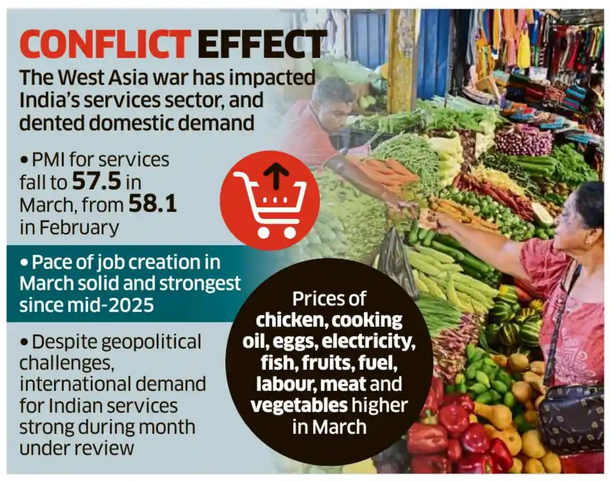
The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for services fell to 57.5 in March, from 58.1 in the previous month.

Input cost witnessed the steepest increase since June 2022, while charge inflation rose to the highest level in seven months.

"Services firms reportedly transferred part of their additional cost burdens to clients, but they continued to absorb some of it. March saw input prices increase at the fastest pace in close to four years, with the gap between rates of inflation the widest since July 2023," S&P Global said in its monthly report.

As per the survey conducted among around 400 services companies, prices of chicken, cooking oil, eggs, electricity, fish, fruits, fuel, labour, meat and vegetables in March were higher, when compared to the previous month.

Of the four broad areas of the service economy monitored by the survey, the quickest increases in input costs and output charges were seen in consumer services and finance & insurance, respectively.


CONFLICT EFFECT
The West Asia war has impacted India's services sector, and dented domestic demand
• PMI for services fall to 57.5 in March, from 58.1 in February
• Pace of job creation in March solid and strongest since mid-2025
• Despite geopolitical challenges, international demand for Indian services strong during month under review
Prices of chicken, cooking oil, eggs, electricity, fish, fruits, fuel, labour, meat and vegetables higher in March

While new business gains continued to underpin growth, output was constrained by the detrimental impact of the West Asia war on demand, market conditions and tourism, the report noted.

Despite the geopolitical challenges, international demand for Indian services remained strong during the month under review.

All four categories—finance & insurance, real estate & business services, consumer services and transport, information & communication — recorded quicker expansions in new export orders.

Subsequently, overall growth in foreign sales neared record highs. Surveyed firms reported gains in orders from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East.

"Demand remained resilient, led by new export orders, which rose to the greatest extent since mid-2024. As such, service providers' expectations for future activity remained positive," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

"However, input cost inflation accelerated to its fastest pace since 2022, indicating that higher fuel, transport and logistics costs are feeding into services," Bhandari added.

The pace of job creation in March was solid and the strongest since mid-2025. Boosting employment growth was a pick-up in business confidence. Firms were at their most upbeat towards the outlook for output in close to 12 years.

"Optimism was pinned on hopes of an improvement in demand and market conditions. Advertising and better customer relations were also expected to bear fruit," S&P Global noted in the report.

Wipro bags $1-bn Olam deal; to buy Mindsprint for $375 mn

IT services firm aims to unlock growth opportunities, catalyse innovation

Srini Pallia

BENGALURU, DHNS

IT services firm Wipro has won a $1-billion contract with Olam Group, a $50-billion+ food and agri-business headquartered in Singapore. The firm said in a filing that the 8-year engagement with Olam Group will exceed $1 billion in contract value, with a committed spend of $800 million.

As part of this broader engagement, the firm will acquire Mindsprint, Olam's IT services arm, for $375 million. The transaction is expected to be completed by June 30, 2026.

Olam employs nearly 40,000 people and is majority-owned by Temasek Holdings.

"We are pleased to partner with Wipro on our transformation journey. Wipro's scale, consulting-led approach, innovation investments, and Wipro Intelligence position it well to advance Olam Group's mission-critical programmes and drive scalable outcomes," Sunny Verghese, Co-Founder and Group CEO of Olam Group, said.

"As Olam accelerates its journey towards being more agile, future-ready, and in line with our priorities under the Reorganisation Plan to sharpen focus on core businesses and maximise shareholder value, we are bringing together the strengths of Mindsprint with Wipro. Mindsprint's deep expertise in the food and agri-business industry, combined with Wipro's global capabilities, creates powerful synergies for growth and end-to-end transformation across the value chain," Verghese added.

As part of the engagement, the fourth-largest IT services firm will partner in an end-to-end transformation through a consulting-led and AI-powered approach.

"Wipro's strategic engagement with Olam is an important step in expanding our farm-to-fork capabilities and scaling the impact of Wipro Intelligence across the food and agri-business industry," said Srini Pallia, CEO and MD, Wipro Limited, adding, "By bringing Mindsprint's deep domain expertise and IP-led solutions, together with Wipro's consulting-led and AI-powered capabilities, we aim to unlock growth opportunities, catalyse innovation, and drive market-ready transformation for Olam Group and our global clients across the industry."

Headquartered in Singapore and founded in 2007, Mindsprint provides technology and digital transformation services across enterprise applications, data & analytics, digital platform engineering, customer experience, cloud & infrastructure, cybersecurity, and business process services.

Mindsprint has a global workforce of over 3,200 employees across India, Singapore, the US, the UK, and the Middle East. The company has a strong food and agri-business domain experience, supply-chain transformation capabilities, and proprietary IP-driven solutions. Its consolidated revenues in CY25 stood at $135.6 million.

Under the terms of the acquisition of Mindsprint by Wipro, the former will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of the latter.

West Asia conflict threatens vital arteries of global energy: FM

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Nirmala Sitharaman

The escalation of the West Asia conflict has evolved from a regional security concern into a systemic tremor, threatening the vital arteries of global energy and hardening the lines of a new, multi-polar world order, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

Speaking at the golden jubilee celebration of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), she said that while the acronym VUCA was coined in the late 1980s to describe a post-Cold War world, it has found its truest and most-unsettling relevance in the last decade.

"I wish we could relegate this term to the history books, yet it has become the only honest vocabulary for our present reality. It is what it is: a world of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, all at once," Sitharaman added.

Referring to the US tariffs and geopolitical uncertainties, Sitharaman said, "the year 2025 was monumental in more ways than we initially thought. Trade fragmentation has introduced severe uncertainty into global supply chains. This led to sharp downward revisions in global growth forecasts, but the year ended more optimistically than previously perceived, particularly for India."

"This current year is even more challenging, as we move from a landscape of 'shocks' to one of permanent volatility," she remarked.

She claimed that India's fiscal position is better than other major economies. "Our general government debt-to-GDP ratio (which includes states' debt), at approximately 81%, is the lowest among major economies after Germany," she said.

She added, "India is the only major economy where the IMF projects this ratio to fall significantly — to 75.8% by 2030 — while the debt outlook for the advanced economies such as the US, China, Germany, and others is projected to worsen."

India's external debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 19.1% as of September 2025 — one of the lowest in the emerging market world. India's forex reserves, at over $688 billion (as of March 31, 2026), provide import cover of nearly 11 months — a substantial buffer.

Sitharaman said India's strong fiscal position gives the RBI room to lower policy interest rates.

"India has fiscal space — room to maintain our capex programme, room for the RBI to cut rates, room to offer targeted support to affected sectors," she said.

"This is the dividend of a decade of fiscal discipline. This is the strategic value of fiscal prudence that pays dividends across decades," she added.

The FM noted that the global public debt has surged to $106 trillion, exceeding 95% of global GDP. As per IMF, the US has a debt-to-GDP ratio of 125% in 2025, with Japan at a staggering 235%. Many advanced economies that spent decades running expansionary fiscal policies now find themselves with severely constrained policy space precisely when they need it most. "Against this backdrop, India continues to stand out," she remarked.

Crude futures rise as Trump threatens Iran over Hormuz

NEW DELHI, PTI: Crude oil prices gained Rs 91 to Rs 9,284 per barrel, hovering near its record levels, in futures trade on Monday after US President Donald Trump warned of military strikes on Iran's power plants and other infrastructure if the Strait of Hormuz is not reopened.

On the Multi-Commodity Exchange, crude oil for May delivery increased by Rs 91, or 1%, to Rs 9,284 per barrel. Oil prices hit record of Rs 9,407 per barrel on March 23, 2026.

The uptick in crude prices came as geopolitical tensions intensified after Trump increased pressure on Tehran while Hormuz remained closed for the sixth consecutive week, disrupting global energy flows, Kaveri More, Commodity Analyst at Choice Broking, said. This has impacted shipments of crude oil, natural gas and refined products, tightening supply conditions and supporting prices, she added.

In the international markets, trends were mixed. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures for the May contract fell 0.48% to $111 per barrel, while Brent oil for June delivery rose 1.3% to $110.43 per barrel.

More said although OPEC+ has announced plans to increase output by 2,06,000 bpd in May, concerns persist over how additional supply would reach markets amid damaged infrastructure and ongoing conflict.

She added that OPEC production fell sharply in March due to forced export cuts, while US crude output also declined earlier this year, following severe winter storms, further adding to global supply constraints.

Dhaval Popat, Energy Analyst at Choice Institutional Equities, said the physical tightness in Southeast Asian markets is gradually shifting westward, which could push Brent crude prices towards $130 per barrel in the coming weeks.

"If the Hormuz situation remains status quo without progress in US-Israel-Iran negotiations, declining floating inventories and tightening marginal storage could drive a sharp increase in oil prices, leading to sustained higher prices during the month of April," he added.

Rupee rises 28 paise against $

MUMBAI, PTI: The rupee gained 28 paise to close at 92.90 against the US dollar on Monday, following the RBI's measures to curb speculative fervour and dampen volatility in the Indian currency.

Forex traders said though the RBI measures are rupee-positive, unabated withdrawal of foreign capital, a firm dollar, and higher crude oil prices amid a volatile geopolitical situation continue to put pressure on the rupee.

The RBI tightened its rules to curb speculative positions and capped banks' net open positions at $100 million.

At the interbank forex, the rupee opened at 93.13 against the US dollar and in intraday trade gained momentum to touch a high of 92.79 against the greenback.

Meanwhile, the dollar index was trading 0.15% lower at 99.87.

Govt procurement through GeM hits Rs 5 lakh crore in FY26

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Government e Marketplace (GeM) on Monday said it has achieved a cumulative gross merchandise value (GMV) of Rs 18.4 lakh crore since inception in 2016, including Rs 5 lakh crore in FY2025-26.

MSEs accounted for 68% of the total orders and 47.1% of GMV during 2025-26, said Mihir Kumar, CEO, GeM.

"Crossing cumulative GMV of Rs 18.4 lakh crore reflects not just scale, but confidence — of buyers, sellers, and institutions — in a transparent and technology-driven procurement ecosystem," Kumar added.

He said technology remains central to GeM's transformation. By leveraging AI/ML, and advanced analytics, GeM has strengthened transparency, efficiency, and trust across the procurement lifecycle, he noted. Key technology-driven interventions by the government procurement platform include ML-driven catalogue validation and pre-sanity checks to reduce errors and real-time analytics to monitor transactions and detect anomalies.

Other initiatives include system-driven tools such as "bid health scores" to enhance decision-making and advanced analytics to detect patterns such as abnormal pricing, suspected collusive bidding behaviour, technical rejection anomalies and suspected buyer-seller collusion.

States recorded 38.3% growth in procurement value during 2025-26, emerging as key drivers of the platform's next phase of expansion, Kumar said. This trend reflects growing confidence among states in GeM as a transparent, efficient, and accountable procurement system, enabling deeper penetration of public procurement at district and local levels, he added.

As per a Ministry of Commerce and Industry statement, more than 11 lakh MSEs are registered on the GeM platform and have received over 51 lakh orders worth Rs 2.36 lakh crore during 2025-26, reflecting a growth of over 20%, compared to the previous fiscal.

CBI claims over Rs 73K crore bank 'fraud' in Anil Ambani Group probe

NEW DELHI, PTI: The CBI is probing bank loan frauds cumulatively worth Rs 73,000 crore in seven cases registered against the Reliance Anil Ambani Group, according to a status report filed in the Supreme Court in February.

The CBI informed the court that it is actively investigating seven cases, and is probing the roles of certain public servants as well.

After reviewing the status report filed by the CBI and its financial investigations counterpart, the ED, the apex court issued an order on March 23.

"...the losses in the other cases also come to several thousands of crores, totalling claims of approximately Rs 73,006 crore," the SC order said, referring to the CBI probe.

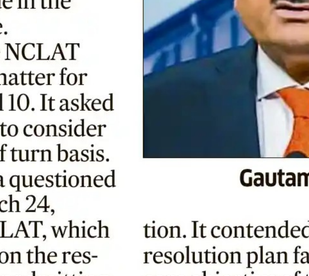
A response from the Reliance Group to a query sent by *PTI* regarding this development is awaited.

The ED told the court that it seized certain documents that speak about a purported "Project Help", indicating that insolvency proceedings were "deliberately" started through unrelated lenders.

The ED also informed the court that it has constituted a special investigation team to probe these cases and is currently working on eight cases related to the Reliance Anil Ambani Group (RAAG).

'AI is accelerating cybersecurity risks at unprecedented speed'

BENGALURU, DHNS: AI-related vulnerabilities are increasing, with about 87% of APAC organisations having experienced the same in 2025. This is the fastest-growing category of cyber risk, and 93% of APAC leaders expect AI to be the most-consequential force shaping cybersecurity in 2026, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2026, published in collaboration with Accenture. It said that this year's findings show a clear shift against the weaponisation of AI, persistent geopolitical friction and systemic supply-chain risks.



Top concerns heading into 2026 are data leaks linked to Gen AI (41%) and advancing adversarial capabilities (26%). Geopolitics is also a defining feature of cybersecurity, as in 2026, 64% of organisations are accounting for geopolitically-motivated cyberattacks, such as disruption of critical infrastructure or espionage, followed by disinformation at 49%.

In the survey, 73% of respondents reported that they or someone in their network had been personally affected by cyber-enabled fraud over the course of 2025.

With 93% of APAC leaders expecting AI to be the most-consequential force shaping the future of cybersecurity, organisations are significantly increasing their vetting of AI tools from 48% in 2025 to 70% in 2026, indicating that more organisations are now prioritising official safety standards and responsible management over rapid adoption.

Jacky Fox, Global Lead, Security Strategy Practice, Accenture, said, "Globally, we're seeing cyber fraud escalate, and AI heighten exposure in ways that challenge even the most-prepared organisations. Across the APAC region, the impact is sharp, as rapid technological adoption confronts a complex threat landscape."

"Organisations must strengthen oversight of AI systems, work closely across sectors to address fast-evolving risks, and invest in skills and capabilities needed to reduce widening resilience gaps. Building collective resilience is no longer optional—it is essential to ensure trust and stability in a more interconnected and unpredictable digital world," she added.

The report added that 66% of APAC respondents were directly affected by or knew someone impacted by cyber-enabled fraud in 2025.

SatLeo Labs raises $5.5 million

BENGALURU, DHNS: Space-tech startup SatLeo Labs, which is focused on capturing high-resolution thermal & visible data from Low Earth Orbit (LEO), has raised $2.2 million in a seed round led by Unicorn India Ventures. With this, SatLeo has raised $5.5 million in total funding to date. The round also saw participation from existing investors Merak Ventures, Java Capital, IIMA-CIIE and Deep tech Investor Manish Gandhi.

The funding will be deployed to advance SatLeo's flagship thermal satellite mission and the development of its AI-powered platform for thermal intelligence applications.

"Sustainability has become imperative amid accelerating climate change, rapid urbanisation, and increasing global uncertainties driven by heat anomalies," said Shravan Bhati, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, SatLeo Labs.

SC won't intervene into proposed takeover of JAL by Adani Enterprises

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has declined to intervene in the proposed takeover of Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) by Gautam Adani's Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) through the insolvency resolution process.

Dealing with a plea by Vedanta Ltd, a bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant refused to interfere with the order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), which had declined to stay Adani Group's Rs 14,535-crore bid to acquire JAL.

The bench, also comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, however, asked the parties to raise their contentions before the NCLAT, which would decide the plea and the counter petition expeditiously on the dispute over the acquisition of JAL by the Adani Group.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Vedanta, contended that its offer was superior to that of Adani and that the Committee of Creditors (CoC) adopted flawed procedure by choosing the lower bid.

He claimed that Vedanta's offer was over Rs 17,000 crore, whereas the other bidder, Adani, was offering about Rs 14,000 crore.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the CoC, contended that the resolution plan is assessed on multiple factors. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for Adani, submitted that no bidder has the guaranteed right to win solely based on offering made in the highest headline value.

The court noted the NCLAT has already fixed the matter for consideration on April 10. It asked the appellate tribunal to consider the matter on an out of turn basis.

The plea by Vedanta questioned the validity of the March 24, 2026, order by the NCLAT, which declined to grant stay on the resolution plan, even after admitting Vedanta's challenge for consideration. It contended that the current resolution plan fails to fulfill the core objective of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, maximisation of the value of the corporate debtor's assets. Claiming that the insolvency process lacked transparency, it also alleged that the process followed by the JAL's CoC in approving AEL's plan was "unfair, opaque, and inequitable".

Gautam Adani

The plea contended that Vedanta was the highest bidder for JAL all through, but the lenders had rejected its plan by taking recourse to, and incorrect criteria for evaluation of resolution plans. It submitted that the matter required consideration, as the insolvency process ran contrary to the objective of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

It was stated that the lenders had previously approved the resolution plan put forth by AEL and rejected bids of various companies, including Dalmia Bharat and Jindal Power.

The CoC had approved AEL's plan with a 93.81% voting share and the Allahabad Bench of the NCLT approved its resolution plan on March 17.

It was also contended that AEL offered to pay Rs 14,535 crore, and Vedanta, for its part, made an initial bid of Rs 17,000 crore, of which the upfront cash component was about Rs 4,000 crore, and the rest payable over six years.

Subsequently, Vedanta revised its bid, offering a total of Rs 16,726 crore, of which Rs 6,563 crore was to be paid upfront, while the rest payable in five years.

As per facts of the matter, the NCLT had in 2024 admitted ICICI Bank's insolvency petition against JAL for a debt of Rs 1,269 crore, which was upheld by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal.

JAL has a significant land bank of nearly 4,000 acre across Uttar Pradesh, particularly in Noida, Greater Noida, and the Yamuna Expressway, besides premier projects like Jaypee International Sports City near the Noida International Airport. The company in debt also owned hotels and cement plants.

Is generative AI making us think less?

SAHANA PRASAD

Can you try solving it on your own? It's uploaded on your class links," I said, putting the chalk down and sitting back, expecting a flurry of activity.

The students stared at the problem for thirty seconds before reaching for an AI chatbot.

Most people don't even roll their eyes at this anymore. It has become normal for everyone, from students to working professionals. Harried parents complain that children are confiding in and seeking help from AI rather than from parents or teachers. In offices, drafts are generated before thoughts are fully formed. An answer arrives the moment a prompt is typed. The uncomfortable work of thinking it through often never happens.

The rise of Generative AI has triggered a debate: Is this technology gradually eroding our capacity for logical thinking — or is that an unfair charge against a tool that is simply being misused?

The disappearance of struggle

There is something deeply human about wanting ease. Cognitive load is real — thinking is effortful, and the brain naturally seeks shortcuts. Till very recently, those shortcuts were limited. You could ask a friend, consult a textbook, or phone an expert. But Generative AI has collapsed all of that into a single text box that responds in seconds, fluently and confidently, at any hour of the day.

The problem is not that the answers are wrong. It is that the struggle, through which logic is built, has been removed.

"Logical thinking is built in that uncomfortable space where we wrestle with uncertainty, test assumptions, discard weak arguments, and refine ideas. When we bypass that process and jump straight to the answer, we may save time — but we lose the cognitive training that helps us solve the next problem independently. Generative AI should function as a thinking partner, not a thinking replacement," says Vineeth Patil, who works closely with Generative AI systems in the Bay Area.

"If users actively question, validate, and build upon what AI generates, their reasoning sharpens. But if they passively consume ready-made responses, their analytical depth can gradually erode. The responsibility lies not in the tool itself, but in how consciously we engage with it," he adds.

When we wrestle with a problem, we are not merely finding an answer — we are training the mental muscles that allow us to find the next answers. When that process is outsourced too quickly, those muscles are used less. Over time, they can weaken.

What educators are seeing

Those working closely with students are

noticing the shift.

Dr Deepthi Das, Professor and Associate Dean, School of Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), who has observed the change firsthand, puts it plainly:

"While GenAI is useful, many students have started treating it as a copying tool, which is affecting their logical thinking. With instant answers available, they are becoming less willing to think and write independently. This over-dependence is slowly reducing their ability to analyse and generate their own ideas."

Her concern goes beyond academic dishonesty. It is not simply that students are submitting AI-generated work — it is that they may not be building the internal architecture required to think independently. The creativity, the false starts, the friction of arriving at an original idea — that process is the learning.

"GenAI should support learning, not replace our reasoning," she adds. "We must sustain our thinking ability, creativity, and originality to grow and remain capable in the era of AI."

Being capable in the era of AI is important. Because, regardless of how advanced the technology becomes, humans must still evaluate, question, and decide.

A tool or a crutch?

Yet the picture is not entirely bleak.

Dr Baishali Garai, Programme Director for Basic Sciences, School of Computer Science and Engineering, RV University, offers a measured perspective:

"Generative AI is not reducing logical thinking; it is reshaping it. The real risk lies not in the technology itself, but in passive consumption. When users rely on AI for ready-made answers without questioning, analysing, or validating them, critical reasoning can weaken. However, when used as a collaborative tool, Generative AI can actually sharpen logic by exposing users to alternative perspectives and structured reasoning."

The distinction between passive consumption and active collaboration is crucial.

Ultimately, the debate around Generative AI and logical thinking is a debate about intellectual responsibility — both individual and institutional.

Schools and workplaces that reward the quality of reasoning, not just the polish of output, are better positioned to cultivate thinkers. Assessment methods that require explanation, defence of conclusions, or real-time problem-solving reduce passive reliance on AI.

But individuals also bear responsibility. Every time we pause before reaching for the chatbot — every time we attempt the draft, sketch the outline, or sit with uncertainty a little longer — we are making a choice about what kind of thinker we want to be.

Generative AI is not going away. Its capabilities will only grow. The question is not whether we use it, but whether we use it in a way that keeps us in the driver's seat.

Technology has always reshaped human thought — from writing and printing to calculators and search engines. Each innovation sparked anxiety about what might be lost. Each time, humans adapted. But adaptation is not passive. It requires intention.

If we treat Generative AI as a partner in thinking rather than a substitute for it, the technology may yet make us sharper. If we do not, the risk identified by educators and practitioners alike is real: we may produce an articulate, well-formatted generation that has quietly forgotten how to think for itself. And that would be a loss no algorithm could fix.

Leading softly with humility

Humble leaders invariably shape culture in ways that loud, ego-driven leadership cannot, writes John J Kennedy

Many of us easily fall for the stereotype that great leaders must necessarily be towering personalities. We think they must be bold, assertive, and endlessly confident. How often have we imagined our leaders as people who make their presence felt and push their teams forward with sheer force of will! However, once we go past that perception, we realise that what truly strengthens teams and keeps institutions thriving is something far more powerful than any of these: humility, a simple yet difficult virtue to practise.

Research has shown that humble leaders invariably shape culture in ways that loud, ego-driven leadership cannot. In fact, the influence of humility extends across various sectors, from classrooms and hospitals to corporate offices and public institutions, creating workplaces where people feel respected, motivated, and capable of delivering their best work.

Two important myths to be discarded while discussing humble leadership. The first is the notion that humility in leadership is a weakness. Or that it reflects indecisiveness; worse, such leaders lack ambition. In contrast, humble leaders are grounded in the profound truth that they are learning and not omniscient.

In other words, a humble leader is aware that every team member is unique and brings something valuable to the table. Such leaders also recognise that listening is often more important than speaking. Because, for these leaders, feedback is not a threat but a valuable gift. They would always share credit, welcome honest conversations, and even encourage members to challenge their ideas. Most importantly, they feel no need to dominate the spotlight. They create space for others to shine.

The positive impact humble leaders have on daily work is impossible to ignore. People working under such leaders report feeling heard, valued, and supported. They feel confident enough to share ideas, participate fully, and acknowledge their errors without hesitation. Fear, authority, and pressure are tools these leaders never use. They strive to create a space centred on trust that gradually translates into meaningful engagement, ultimately providing satisfaction to employees. Naturally, therefore, in such workspaces, no time is wasted either in defending oneself or in impressing anyone. These spaces become truly open, collaborative, and innovative.

Needless to say, this kind of openness also inspires creativity. When ego and tight control are set aside, people think more freely, and solutions emerge through collective effort rather than from individuals working alone. It is in such a setting that real innovation begins to blossom.

By working, learning, and growing together, these teams are strengthened and become adaptable. In fact, even in difficult situations, they stay steady, confident in the power of joint problem-solving.

Humility, it must be remembered, is not just a soft, feel-good idea meant only for ethical debates, but it has a direct impact on results. Leaders who remain humble would never shy away from feedback. They remain open to learning and can handle uncertainty with greater clarity because they are unburdened by ego. They admit to mistakes and tend to recover faster from setbacks because their focus is on learning rather than blaming others.

A humble leader continually learns and adapts, which in turn encourages the team to grow in the same way. Such leaders help all types of institutions grow by building respect, trust, and a sense of belonging. No wonder employees stay longer in such spaces. The simple reason is they feel supported and valued.

Today's workspaces are very diverse. The problems encountered are so complex that the leader alone cannot provide solutions. The all-knowing, towering leader myth, therefore, needs to be busted. True leadership is no longer about being the strongest or the loudest. It's about helping others believe in themselves and grow. A leader who can honestly say "I don't know" and is willing to learn from the team is the need of the hour.

The second myth to be dispelled is that humility is something people are born with. Studies have shown that it is something leaders develop over time by trying, learning, and practising. By asking for honest feedback, owning up to mistakes, and ensuring that the people who do the heavy lifting receive the credit, the leader matures.

When leaders listen closely, stay present, and treat their team as partners, the culture around them slowly changes. Trust grows stronger. People feel more invested in their work, and the institution becomes their second home in the real sense. Let's not forget that what gives organisations their strength, their continuity, and perhaps even their soul are these quieter qualities, rather than the dramatic speeches or grand displays of authority.

(The author is an educator with over three decades of leadership experience)

BULLETIN BOARD

Hobby courses

The Visvesvaraya Industrial & Technological Museum is offering Summer Vacation Hobby Courses in April–May 2026 for Junior (5th–7th Std) and Senior (8th–11th Std) students (for the 2026–27 academic year). The course fee is Rs 1500 per course. Last dates: April batch (Senior, April 20–24) – April 15, 2026; Junior batch (April 27– May 1) – April 22, 2026; Senior batch (May 4–8) – April 30, 2026; Junior batch (May 11–15) – May 6, 2026. Seats are limited and allotted on a first-come, first-served basis. Register online via https://tinyurl.com/VITM-VHC2026 or through the museum website.

Science workshops

The Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium is organising hands-on science workshops and activities for students of Classes 3 to 10 across April–May 2026. Programmes include themes such as Tiny Tots, Fun with Science, Aero-modelling, Astronomy through Apps, Astro-computing, the Planet Earth course, and workshops on Electricity, Mathematics, Water Rockets, and more. Details and registration: https://t.ly/7yjKH

Business development

Hamsi Marketing Private Limited is hiring a business development (Sales) intern who can work from home. Students with the knowledge of digital marketing, email marketing, written English proficiency, MS Excel, and social media marketing can apply by May 1. The stipend is Rs 13,000 /month. Apply at: https://tinyurl.com/3a9pwtmv.

LinkedIn outreach specialist

The Influence OS is hiring a LinkedIn outreach specialist intern who can work from home. Students with knowledge of copywriting, lead generation, LinkedIn marketing, psychology, sales, and sales strategy can apply by May 3. The stipend is Rs 5,000 - 10,000 /month. Apply at: https://shorturl.at/LCNsk.

Influencer marketing & growth trainee

Digital Web Solutions is hiring an influencer marketing & growth trainee in Bengaluru. Students with knowledge of MS Excel, client interaction, client relationship, effective communication, and spoken English proficiency can apply by May 1. The stipend is Rs 10,000 / month. Apply at: https://tinyurl.com/mr2565na.

Product management

RuralEquip PVT Ltd is hiring a product management intern in Bengaluru. Students with proficiency in spoken English, Java, no-code development, Node.js, PHP, Product Lifecycle Management (PLM), product management, and React can apply by April 30. The stipend is Rs 5,000-12,000 /month. Apply at: https://tinyurl.com/2ssympza.

Evergreen courses for future

UMA ASWANI

Recently, many students approached me to ask which courses might remain relevant in the future.

Here are a few suggestions I gave them:

- **Technology & AI:** Due to automation and digital transformation, Computer Science Engineering, Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, Machine Learning, Data Science & Big Data Analytics, Cybersecurity, and Cloud Computing have become highly popular courses.
- **Healthcare & biotechnology:** There will always be demand for medical research and innovation. Medicine (MBBS, MD), Nursing, Biotechnology, Biomedical Engineering, Genetics & Genomics, Microbiology, Cancer Research, and Public Health are going to be in demand.
- **Sustainability & environmental sciences:** Climate change is driving massive job creation. Governments and companies are investing heavily in green tech. Hence, subjects like Environmental Engineering, Renewable Energy Engineering, Climate Science, and Sustainability Management are good choices to consider.
- **Robotics and automation:** Machines are replacing repetitive work. Robotics Engineering, Mechatronics, and Industrial Automation will always be in demand.
- **Finance, FinTech & business:** Finance is evolving with technology. Courses such as Finance, Economics, FinTech, Business Analytics, Chartered Accountancy, Investment and Risk Management, Supply Chain and Logistics, Human Resource Management, Entrepreneurship, International Trade, Engineering Management, and Strategy and Operations Management are recommended.
- **Psychology & human sciences:** Human-centred roles are becoming increasingly valuable. AI can never replace human emotional intelligence. With mental health awareness increasing, courses in Psychology, Neuroscience, Behavioural Science, and Counselling will always be significant.
- **Creative and digital fields:** Courses like Game Design & Development, Graphic Design, Visual Communication, Animation & VFX, UI/UX Design, and Digital Marketing are rapidly growing.
- **Space & advanced sciences:** Aerospace Engineering, Astrophysics, and Space Technology are sought-after courses.
- **Law"** Cyber Law, Intellectual Property Law, Tech Policy, Data Privacy and Digital Rights, International Dispute Resolution Law, Human Rights Law, Medical Ethics Law, Criminal Law, Commercial Law, Real Estate Law, Banking and Finance Law, Energy and Environmental Law, Media Law, and Civil Law.
- **Culinary Science:** Food Science and Technology, Hospitality Management, Baking and Patisserie, International Cuisine, Wine, Spirits and Beverage Management, Food Studies, and Sustainability.
- **Performing Arts:** Music (both vocal and instrumental), Theatre, Acting, Directing, Film and Television, Screenwriting, Choreography, and Dance. It is better to go for a field that integrates technology, demands problem-solving, and has global applicability.

Lessons about social media usage from the idiot box era

AASIF IQBAL J

In the 1990s, when we were children, there were only a few media formats. The default was TV, followed by radio, then print media — books, newspapers, and magazines. However, we didn't read unless it was for academics or competitive exams. So most consumption was through TV.

We used to wait for specific shows. Thursdays used to be special because one of my favourite series — Meendum Kuttichathan — an unofficial sequel to India's first 3D film, My Dear Kuttichathan, was screened at 7 pm. Each episode ended with a cliffhanger, leaving us wanting more. Unlike today, there was no pause, rewind, watch later or a re-telecast. If you wanted to watch it, it was only on Thursdays at 7 pm.

Ours was a manual CRT TV that supported only eight channels. So every time someone had to get up from the couch, go to the TV, and press the button to change the channel. With a limited choice, we were forced to commit to one particular channel or show during our TV time.

We had a family ritual of watching Sun TV News at 8 pm every day. The news broadcast had a quiz section at the start of a commercial break, and the answer would be revealed before the news resumed. I'd write down the questions and answers in my diary, building my own little knowledge base, which helped me during the quiz session at the school assembly and in contests.

In 2000, a remote-controlled TV came home that supported a hundred channels, and we had access to 80+ channels from the cable TV operator. With an abundance of choice, channel surfing became one of our hobbies. Thanks to my father, the family ritual of watching the news together stayed for decades, no matter the time.

The era of tailored content

Then came the Internet. When access was through a dial-up connection billed at an hourly rate, we were intentional with what we did. Then there was broadband, GPRS, and eventually, access to the Internet became universal.

Today, for most people, social media and big-tech apps are the Internet. Short-form video consumption is like the TV of the 2000s. Scrolling through short-form videos is a form of channel surfing — always excited about what may show up next.

However, channel surfing was not personalised. It wasn't tailored to what we thought or which channels we engaged with the most. The short-form videos we watch are personalised recommendations based on our past engagement with the platform and predictions of what might interest us. The friction is higher now. The algorithm has outsmarted us in a way that makes it hard to break free.

Social media usage, specifically short-form videos, is causing addiction and sparking numerous problems among children. Countries like Australia have already banned social media for kids. In India, Karnataka announced its intent to ban social media apps for kids under 16.

But children are not the only victims. All adults, including our grandparents, are absorbed by short-form videos on social media. After a session of scrolling, we hardly remember anything we watched.

Regulating the time spent

Back then, TV was given a bad rap. It was called "Idiot Box". School teachers would repeatedly ask us not to watch TV, especially if we were in class 10 or 12, facing board exams that would decide our fate. In every parent-teacher meeting, teachers requested that parents disconnect cable TV services so their kids could study. However, most parents just regulated the TV time.

The same strategy can be used today for social media consumption. I personally do this in multiple ways. I use a method called time blocking, allocating up to one hour a day to consuming social media, specifically Instagram. I split that into two sessions: the first session is in the afternoon, post-lunch, when my mental energy is low. I don't go to the reels tab; instead, I go through my feed and the stories of accounts I follow. The next session is in the evening when I'm mostly consuming for edutainment.

Secondly, I curate what I consume. Every time a useful reel comes up, I mark it as "interested." If it's something of no value to me, I'll mark it as "not interested." This way, the algorithm adjusts to my needs. I do this to make my feed relevant. I can always change it by searching for a topic, watching one reel, and marking it as "interested" to ensure I get reels on similar topics in the future.

You can do this with your YouTube feed as well. Unsubscribe from all channels that don't add value to you and watch only what matters. Your feed will be tweaked accordingly.

Thirdly, I reflect on what I consumed. Remember how I used to maintain a knowledge base by watching the quiz section and regularly reviewing it? I take a similar approach with online video content, taking notes in my knowledge base. I am currently watching the Crash Course YouTube Channel, specifically their recent course on scientific thinking. After watching a video, I write down the key points and review the citations mentioned in the video description.

This is usually hard for beginners. So, take one step at a time. The easiest way to reflect is to comment on the video about what you felt and what resonated with you. You can then move on to building your own knowledge base. This can be done with the help of an AI assistant, too. But that wouldn't be called "reflection".

If you genuinely want to change how you consume the internet without getting overwhelmed, use any or all of the three methods. We did this as kids. We watched cricket matches, wrote down the scores every over of the first innings, and compared them with the second innings to make our own predictions. We underlined new words in the sports section of the newspaper and checked the meaning in the dictionary.

This is possible. It is only a matter of beginning.

Questions? Suggestions? Feedback? Write to us: dheducation@deccanherald.co.in

Blanka Vlasic

Double Oly medallist Vlasic named World 10K ambassador

BENGALURU, DHNS: Double Olympic medallist and two-time World Champion Blanka Vlasic will be the International Event Ambassador TCS World 10K to be held here on April 26.

One of the finest high jumpers the sport has seen, Vlasic brings with her a career built on longevity and success at the highest level. The Croatian star won Olympic silver at Beijing 2008 and followed it up with a bronze at Rio 2016, alongside multiple World Championship and World Indoor titles.

Her personal best of 2.08m, achieved in 2009, remains the Croatian national record and ranks as the third-highest clearance in women's high jump history.

"I am honoured to be part of the 18th edition of the TCS World 10K Bengaluru. Being associated with an event that brings thousands of people together through running is truly inspiring and energising. Running is a sport that keeps us physically active and mentally strong, and it continues to play a vital role in shaping the athletics community.

"My message to every participant is simple – give it your best, prepare well and embrace the journey. I look forward to seeing everyone in Bengaluru as we come together to celebrate the spirit of #EndendiguBengaluru," Vlasic said in a statement released on Monday.

CUE SPORTS

Advani blazes a trail in pool too

Bengalurean completes 'Grand Slam' of national titles

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

When organisers of the 9-ball pool National Championships in Ludhiana were going through the entry list last month, they must have rubbed their eyes in disbelief at seeing Pankaj Advani's name.

Throughout a glittering career where he has won over 28 world titles in both billiards and snooker and reigned supreme in both disciplines at the national level with a cupboard full of trophies at the junior and senior level, the Bengalurean had steadfastly stayed away from pool. He's even said multiple times that "billiards is my wife and snooker a mistress" and has remained committed only to those two.

Well, after 25 years of playing the sport at the highest level, Advani felt like the time was ripe for some indulgences. Despite the world championships in billiards around the corner, the Padma Bhushan and Khel Ratna winner opted to enroll himself for the 9-ball pool Nationals.

"Honestly, I don't even have a very clear answer to this because pool was never even, until two weeks ago, it was never on the cards for me," Advani told *DH*. "I always knew that pool is probably one of the most exciting versions of cue sport because of its fast pace and unpredictability, the twists and turns it brings in terms of spectator engagement.

"I think it's a sport that everybody plays and understands. Among all the cue sports, it's the easiest to play and easiest to understand. So I thought, you know, why not play. I was just going to try my hand at it with absolutely no expectation of doing anything of going far in the national championships."

A master at whatever he attempts, Advani blazed a trail in his maiden foray into pool, annexing both the 9-ball and 10-ball titles to become just the second cueist after Alok Kumar to complete a Grand Slam of all national titles. While in 9-ball final he outplayed Nitin Sharma of Chandigarh 11-6, in the 10-ball title clash, he outlasted Railways' Pushpender Singh 11-9 in a cracking game where fortunes swung back and forth until the end.

"The first one, two matches were a bit of a struggle, you know, still picking up the game and learning. And then suddenly there was a switch, I think, after three days, and I started playing at a very different level where I felt like, 'okay, now I actually have a chance to go deep in the tournament'," said Advani.

"I honestly can't put it into words. It's unbelievable, it's like a dream. I'm still going through a fairytale run. I thought I would complete it by winning the 9-ball first. And then actually, I was not even playing the 10-ball national championships.

"And as an afterthought, I said, since I'm doing well in the 9-ball -- and I didn't even win the 9-ball at that time -- I committed to playing the 10-ball. If somebody had said that you'd reach the top eight or top four, I think I would have taken that, but to win both titles back to back and do a double in pool for the first time, on debut, is unbelievable. It's still yet to sink in."

So, having cracked the pool code, does Advani fancy his chances more in that discipline now? "I don't have the answer to that right now, because I just want to enjoy my two victories. But I definitely will give it a thought. I don't know how much of pool I'll be able to play.

"I would definitely love to give it a try in a couple of the big events in the Middle East. Of course, the level is definitely higher internationally. We have some legends of the game. I'm open to trying. I don't know how much of my time I'll be able to give to pool though," Advani concluded.

The next challenge for Advani is the IBSF World Billiards Championships in Carlow, Ireland from April 24-29.

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

- Pankaj Advani has won a whopping 28 IBSF World Championships in billiards (20) and snooker (8) combined.
- At the Asian Championships, Advani has triumphed on 15 occasions -- winning nine billiards, three 15-red snooker, one 6-red snooker and two team snooker golds.
- Advani has won 2 Asian Games billiards gold -- 2006 and 2010.
- At the National Championships at the senior level, Advani has stood on top of the podium a record 28 times. He's won 11 gold each in billiards and snooker, four in 6-red snooker and two in pool (9-ball and 10-ball).

Pankaj Advani with his 9-ball and 10-ball pool National Championships trophies.

Lalit to fight for gold at Asian U-23 wrestling

NEW DELHI, PTI: The U-23 Asian Championships bronze medallist Lalit dominated China's Huoying Shi to enter the men's 55kg Greco Roman gold-medal match at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Monday.

The 23-year-old Lalit outclassed Huoying Shi 11-3 in the semifinals.

But Aman (77kg, Greco Roman) and former champion Sunil Kumar (87kg, Greco Roman) went down in their respective semifinals on a mixed opening day for the Indian contingent.

They will contest for bronze on Tuesday.

Lalit, who had bagged the bronze medal in the Muhamet Malo Wrestling meet last month, will now take on 2025 Asian Championships bronze medallist Ikhtiyor Botirov of Uzbekistan after he defeated Ulan Uulu in the second semifinal 5-3.

In the 77kg Greco Roman semifinal, Aman went down against Zagreb Open old medallist Ali Oskou of Iran 13-3.

The Indian, who had reversed a 1-4 deficit to win 6-4 against China's Halishan Bahejiang in the quarterfinals, will now face Yeonghun Noh of South Korea in the bronze-medal match.

The 2020 Asian champion Sunil Kumar will be going for his fourth medal at the continental championship but it will not be the yellow metal after he lost his 87kg bout against Gholamreza Farokhisenjani of Iran 0-8.

In the 65kg Greco Roman weight category, Sunny Kumar went down in the qualification round against Saifulla Kurman of Kazakhstan and was eliminated.

Madrid hoping for that Real magic

Record 15-time winners take on red-hot Bayern in quarterfinals

MADRID, AFP

Vincent Kompany's Bayern Munich visit Real Madrid on Tuesday in the Champions League quarterfinals high on confidence and looking like Europe's most complete side, bolstered by the likely return of superstar striker Harry Kane.

Record 15-time winners Madrid have endured a difficult season, plagued by inconsistency, but have made a habit of pulling off the unexpected in this competition.

Just as it seemed their well of Champions League magic was running dry, Madrid produced their best performance of the season to crush Pep Guardiola's Manchester City in the last 16.

Despite Madrid's prestige and troupe of attacking stars -- Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior, and Jude Bellingham included, as well as City hat-trick hero Federico Valverde -- Bayern are arguably favourites to lift the trophy.

"It would be presumptuous to assume that we'll definitely advance," said honorary Bayern president Uli Hoeness. "But we haven't had such great chances in terms of the playing quality as we have this year in a long time."

Kane, who has scored 48 goals in 40 appearances across all competitions this season, missed Bayern's battling 3-2 Bundesliga win at Freiburg on Saturday with an ankle issue.

With Michael Olise and Luis Diaz joining Kane in attack, Kompany's side play an aggressive, high-pressing style which helped them demolish Atalanta in the last 16, 10-2 on aggregate.

Bayern came from two goals down to beat Freiburg and match-winner Lennart Karl said that fighting spirit was crucial heading into the Madrid clash.

Real Madrid will be banking big on their star forwards Kylian Mbappe (right) and Vinicius Junior (second from right) when they host Bayern Munich on Tuesday. AFP

LIVE 12:30 AM, SONY SPORTS

Perri Leeds the way!

Leeds United reached the FA Cup semifinals for the first time in 39 years as they survived a dramatic penalty shoot-out after squandering a two-goal lead in a thrilling clash with West Ham on Sunday.

Daniel Farke's side were moments away from victory at the London Stadium after Ao Tanaka's first-half goal and Dominic Calvert-Lewin's second-half penalty put them in control.

But West Ham staged a stoppage-time rally as Mateus Fernandes reduced the deficit before Axel Disasi's equaliser forced extra time.

With the score still level at 2-2 after the additional period, Leeds keeper Lucas Perri emerged as their shoot-out hero. Joel Piroe missed Leeds' first penalty but Calvert-Lewin, Brenden Aaronson, Wilfried Gnonto and Pascal Struijk all converted their kicks.

Perri saved Jarrod Bowen's opening effort for West Ham and also denied Pablo as Leeds won 4-2.

Results: West Ham: 2 (Fernandes 90+3, Disasi 90+6) drew with Leeds: 2 (Tanaka 26, Calvert-Lewin 75), Leeds won 4-2 on penalties.

Arsenal face Sporting

Mikel Arteta has urged shell-shocked Arsenal to embrace a major test of their character as they seek to recover from a pair of devastating defeats in Tuesday's Champions League quarterfinal at Sporting Lisbon.

Arteta's side suffered a shock 2-1 defeat at second-tier Southampton in the FA Cup quarterfinals on Saturday, a fortnight after losing 2-0 to Manchester City in the League Cup final.

The Gunners had been chasing an unprecedented quadruple until their domestic cup dreams were demolished in painful fashion.

The chastening loss to Southampton was only Arsenal's fifth defeat this season and marked the first time they have been beaten in successive games in this campaign.

India suffer blows before big test

NEW DELHI, PTI

India will look to make the most of familiar conditions and home support when the Asia-Oceania Group I ties of the Billie Jean King Cup begin at the DLTA Complex on Tuesday, with promotion to the 2026 play-offs firmly on their radar.

However, the home challenge has suffered a dent with the withdrawal of Shrivalli Bhamidipaty and an injury to Vaidehi Chaudhari.

Placed alongside Indonesia, Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand and Thailand, the hosts face a stiff challenge in a tightly-contested field where only the top two teams will progress while the bottom two sides will be relegated to Group II for 2027.

India return to the regional competition after a disappointing outing in the 2025 play-offs held in Bengaluru, where they finished third in a three-team Group G.

The hosts suffered a 1-2 defeat to Slovenia and a 0-3 loss to the Netherlands, despite spirited efforts from debutant Shrivalli and Sahaja Yamalapalli.

That campaign marked a transition phase for the team, and the responsibility in singles now firmly rests on Sahaja and top-ranked Vaishnavi Adkar, who lead India's charge in the format.

Experienced campaigner Ankita Raina, meanwhile, is expected to focus on doubles duties, where her experience alongside Rutuja Bhosale remains a key asset. It won't be a surprise if skipper Vishal Uppal asks Ankita to play singles also during the tournament.

Shrivalli Bhamidipaty pulled out due to a back spasm, confirmed the team's captain Vishal Uppal. DH PHOTO

Sahaja, India's number two player at number 384, has been a consistent performer on the ITF circuit, reaching multiple semifinals over the past year and breaking into the top-300, underlining her role as the team's lead singles option.

She also gained exposure at the WTA level, including a main-draw win on debut at the Chennai Open.

"Shrivalli withdrew from the team due to back spasm. Vaidehee Chaudhari would have replaced her but she twisted her ankle on Thursday while practising with the team. She hasn't fully recovered so we can't risk her. Zeel Desai has replaced her," Uppal said.

RIT cagers win all-India title

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru's Ramaiah Institute of Technology (RIT) clinched the men's title at the All India Inter-collegiate Basketball Championship held in Sancoale, Goa on Sunday.

RIT defeated the hosts BITS, Goa 60-48 with Kanishka leading the scoring with 22 points while Pranesh (13) and Dhruva (12) made key contributions.

In the women's final, RIT finished runners-up after losing 37-40 to Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University. Nakshatra (15) and Aadhya Aital (10) were the main scorers for the Bengaluru side.

Results: Final: Men: RIT, Bengaluru: 60 (Kanishka 22 pts, Pranesh 13, Dhruva 12) bt BITS Goa: 48 (Niel 18, Prathik 14).
Women: LSR, Delhi University: 40 (Aanavi 22) bt RIT: 37 (Nakshatra 15, Aadhya Aital 10).

USA's Jessica Pegula poses with her dog Maddie and the winner's trophy.

Pegula romps to Charleston double

MIAMI, AFP: Defending champion Jessica Pegula clinched back-to-back victories at the WTA Charleston Open clay court tournament on Sunday, routing Ukraine's Yuliia Starodubtseva in straight sets to claim her second title of the year.

Top seed Pegula, who had gone to three sets in every round on her way to Sunday's final, was in no mood to take the scenic route again as she sprinted to a 6-2, 6-2 victory in 1hr 22 minute against her 89th-ranked opponent.

American fourth seed Tommy Paul saved three match points before scoring a battling three-set victory over unseeded Argentine Roman Burruchaga to win the ATP Houston US Men's Clay Court Championship.

Paul, 28, held his nerve in a nail-biting third set to dig out a 6-1, 3-6, 7-5 triumph.

Pragg under pressure at halfway stage

PAPHOS (CYPRUS), PTI: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa will be desperate for an elusive win in his bid to stay afloat in the Candidates Tournament when he takes on Dutchman Anish Giri in the eighth round here on Tuesday.

The 20-year-old from Chennai, who currently occupies the third spot with Giri after logging 3.5 points in seven rounds, just has another seven rounds to turn the tide at the halfway stage.

Starting off with a victory over Giri in the opener, Praggnanandhaa has been looking for a second win that has remained elusive.

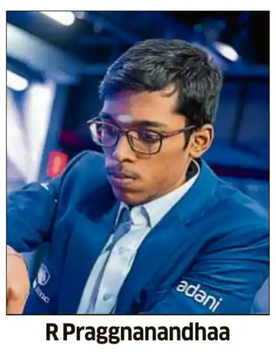
It has been a tough ride in which he has drawn five games and lost one against tournament leader Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan, who has enjoyed a fairytale journey since last October when he won the World Cup against a highly competitive field.

At the start of the tournament he was, at best, a dark horse according to pundits but he has proved himself way stronger than the rest.

He has, so far, clocked the most impressive performance in the history of the tournament by winning five and drawing the remaining two games.

With Sindarov on six points, the nearest contender and only one within striking distance is Fabiano Caruana of the United States and he too is 1.5 points behind the leader.

Round 8 pairings: Anish Giri (Ned, 3.5) vs R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3.5); Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 2.5) vs Fabiano Caruana (USA, 4.5); Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 2) vs Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 6); Wei Yi (Chn, 3) vs Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 3).
Women: Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 4.5) vs Divya Deshmukh (3.5); Aleksandra Goryachkina (Rus, 3) vs Kateryna Lagno (Rus, 3.5); Bibisara Assuabayeva (Kaz, 3) vs R Vaishali (Ind, 4); Zhongyi Tan (Chn, 2.5) vs Jiner Zhu (Chn, 3).



R Praggnanandhaa

Preeti stuns Oly medallist to enter final; Nikhat, Lovlina exit

ULAANBAATAR (MONGOLIA), PTI: Rising Indian boxer Preeti Pawar (**in pic**) downed Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aeji Im of Korea to storm into the final while the seasoned Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain bowed out of the Asian Boxing Championships here Monday.

Priya and Arundhati Choudhary also notched wins in their respective semifinals while world championship medallist Pooja Rani and Ankushita Boro signed off with bronze medals after losing their semifinals.

The star of the day was Asian Games bronze medallist Preeti, who delivered a composed and clinical performance, dominating all three rounds against Im to secure a 5-0 win.

She will now face Chinese Taipei's Huang Hsiao-wen, a three-time World Champion and Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist, in a marquee gold medal clash.

In the women's 60kg category, Priya produced a commanding display to defeat local favourite Namuun Monkhor 5-0, sealing her spot in the final.

She will now take on North Korea's Un Gyong Won in the title bout. Arundhati impressed with a 4-1 victory over Uzbek Oysha Toirova in the 70kg semifinal.

The World Boxing Cup Final gold medallist showcased control and composure to progress to the final where she is set to face Kazakhstan's Bakyt Seidish. Two-time world champion Nikhat, however, went down 0-5 to reigning Olympic medalist China's Wu Yu in the 51kg semifinal.

Aditi finishes T-27 as Coughlin wins

LAS VEGAS, PTI: Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded a three-over 75 in her final round to finish tied 27th at the Aramco Championship here, ending the week with an overall total of eight-over par.

Aditi dropped three bogeys in her final round — on the fourth, sixth and 17th holes — and with no birdies to offset them, signed off with a three-over par round. She had earlier returned rounds of 74, 71 and 76 in the first three days.

Pranavi Urs carded a four-over 76 to finish tied 66th with a total of 17-over par (76-75-78-76), while Avani Prashanth returned a five-over 77 to end the week in 73rd position with an overall score of 21-over par (75-76-81-77).

Lakshya, Sindhu lead India's charge

NINGBO (CHINA), PTI

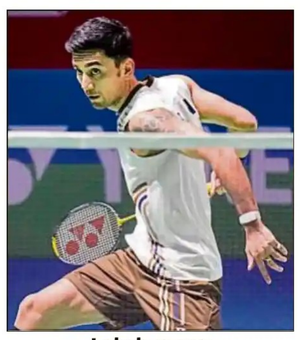
Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have withdrawn from the Badminton Asia Championships due to the former's shoulder injury, even as in-form Lakshya Sen and seasoned PV Sindhu gear up to spearhead India's challenge with an aim to end a long wait for a singles title in the continental showpiece.

Satwik and Chirag, who had won the title in 2023, opted out as the former continues to recover.

"Satwik still has some pain, so they won't be playing this week," coach Tan Kim Her said.

The duo had earlier pulled out of the Swiss Open ahead of their quarterfinal match due to a recurring right shoulder injury to Satwik.

India will now rely on Lakshya and Sindhu in singles, with both looking to end the country's 61-year wait for a title in the discipline.



Lakshya sen

Former national champion Dinesh Khanna remains the only Indian to win the men's singles gold at the continental meet in 1965, and Lakshya will be keen to follow in his footsteps after a runner-up finish at the All England Championships.

The 24-year-old from Almora will open his campaign against Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk Yiu.

Sindhu, meanwhile, returns after a disrupted European leg. The two-time Olympic medallist was stranded in Dubai en route to the All England Championships due to the conflict in West Asia, forcing her withdrawal. She subsequently skipped the Swiss Open to recover and will begin her campaign against Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching.

India will also have a busy men's singles slate, with HS Prannoy, returning after recovering from a shoulder injury, set to face a qualifier, while Kidambi Srikanth takes on Singapore's eighth seed Loh Kean Yew. US Open champion Ayush Shetty faces China's fifth seed Li Shi Feng.

In women's singles, apart from Sindhu, Unnati Hooda meets Thailand's Supanida Katethong, Tanvi Sharma takes on Malaysia's K Letshanaa, and Malvika Bansod faces Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan.

"The first thing that stands out is his (Devdutt Padikkal) determination. On a pitch like this, when runs don't come easily at the start, Devdutt showed great courage to stay patient.

DINESH KARTHIK, RCB MENTOR

IN BRIEF

Contrasting wins for K'taka hockey sides

▸ Brace from Rajesh Prateek Yarakal (15th and 33rd minute) helped Karnataka post a narrow 2-1 victory over hosts Bihar in a Division B match of the Hockey India Sub-Junior Men National Championship in Rajgir on Monday, reports DHNS.

Meanwhile in the women's sub-junior, Karnataka scored a commanding 6-1 win over Gujarat in a Pool B, Division B match in Ranchi.

Result: Men: Karnataka: 2 (Rajesh Yarakal 15th, 33rd) bt Bihar: 1 (Abhay Shah 6th). Women: Karnataka: 6 (KP Sinchana 20th, 52nd, MM Thaniya 2nd, SM Kusumanjali 19th, Pretti Neelaraddi 22nd, Huggennavar Basamma Shivappa 26th) bt Gujarat: 1 (Parvatiben Gamar 31th)

Ideal SA post 5-0 victory

▸ Karthik and Vinish netted a brace each as Ideal Sports Academy thrashed Primrose Hockey Club 5-0 in the KSHA 'B' Division Hockey League Championship on Monday, reports DHNS.

Result: Ideal Sports Academy: 5 (Karthik 2nd, 22nd, Vinish 23rd, 36th, Ajay 43rd) bt Primrose Hockey Club: 0.

Hebbal enter quarters

▸ Hebbal hammered Jayanagar 10-2 to take the top spot in Group C and qualify for the quarterfinals of the Vaishnavi Chief Minister's Cup football tournament at the KSFA Stadium in Bengaluru on Monday, reports DHNS.

Results: Group C: Hebbal: 10 (Vishal Villa 10th, 43rd, Abrahim Ahamed 11th, Udit G 68th, 85th, 89th, 90+2nd, Vaishakh Mayaya 70th, Md Ameenuddin 81st, 83rd) bt Jayanagar: 2 (Nikhil KT 6th, 74th).

Group D: Byatraayanapura: 8 (Mrinal S Gowda 15th, 44th, 66th, Yeshwanth Reddy 29th, Maria Dinesh J 36th, Manjunath K 60th, Sandeep Kumar Saikia 85th, Sathish B 90th) bt Yeshwanthpura: 0.

Rain hands KKR first point

Match abandoned due to bad weather as Punjab Kings jump to the top

KOLKATA, PTI

The game between Kolkata Knight Riders and Punjab Kings at the Eden Gardens was abandoned due to persistent rain and thunderstorms in Kolkata on Monday. PTI

Kolkata Knight Riders bagged their first point of the season after the IPL match against Punjab Kings was abandoned after a combination of heavy rains and wet outfield made the play impossible to resume here on Monday.

When the initial round of rain fell on Eden Gardens, the KKR were struggling at 25 for 2 in 3.4 overs. The proceedings never restarted from the point despite the cut-off time getting moved up to 11.14pm.

The PBKS too received a point and moved atop the table for the time being with five points from three games. The Kolkatans now have one point from three matches, ahead of Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings who are yet to open their account.

Incidentally, the fixture between KKR and PBKS here during IPL 2025 was also called off because of rain.

KKR have a third home match in a row, facing Lucknow Super Giants on Thursday but rain is predicted on that day too. Cutting back to the day's match, rain and winds lashed the venue from 9 pm, gradually turning into a thunderstorm.

The wind was so heavy that the unique 'hanging' Eden press box supported by iron beams shook under the gale force, resembling an 'earthquake'.

The drizzle finally subsided around 10.30pm, prompting the ground staff to spring into action and remove the covers.

The pitch and outfield appeared largely intact with no significant seepage, although a few puddles had formed near the boundary lines due to water runoff from the covers after they were peeled off.

An inspection followed with on-field umpires Abhijeet Bengeri and J Madanagopal assessing conditions.

The Cricket Association of Bengal president Sourav Ganguly too checked the firmness of the ground and after a lengthy discussion with KKR skipper Rahane and his Punjab counterpart Shreyas Iyer the match was called off at 11pm.

On a day when KKR were without both their frontline spinners -- an well Sunil Narine and an injured Varun Chakravarthy -- their decision to bat first seemed to have backfired spectacularly.

Punjab Kings' Aussie speedster Xavier Bartlett struck twice in three balls in a fiery second over, removing both their star overseas batters -- Finn Allen (6) and Cameron Green (4).

Pacer Arshdeep Singh set the tone in the opening over. Allen looked tentative against the left-armer, edging and missing more than once, before Bartlett finished the job in the next over in a fine display of swing and seam.

Allen had a couple of close shaves -- beaten on the edge and nearly undone by a yorker that he somehow dug out for four -- but his luck ran out soon.

Attempting an inside-out drive to a length ball outside off, he could only manage a faint nick.

Promoted to No. 3 ahead of Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Green, the highest-paid overseas player at Rs 25.20 crore, continued his miserable outing having earlier managed scores of 18 (against Mumbai Indians) and 2 (Sunrisers Hyderabad),

Bartlett struck again with a similar back of a length delivery in the channel, swinging away inducing another loose poke.

SCORE BOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: Ajinkya Rahane (not out) 8, Finn Allen c Prabhsimran b Bartlett 6, Cameron Green c Prabhsimran b Bartlett 4, Angkrish Raghuvanshi (not out) 7.
TOTAL (for 2 wkts, 3.4 overs) 25.
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-16.
Bowling: Arshdeep Singh 2-0-16-0, Xavier Bartlett 1.4-0-9-2.
Result: Match abandoned.

Roaring Royals eye an encore

Rajasthan take on smarting Mumbai Indians today

GUWAHATI, PTI

Yashasvi Jaiswal

LIVE 7:30 PM

Mumbai Indians will hope that skipper Hardik Pandya regains full fitness when they square off against a confident Rajasthan Royals unit, which will be keen to extend its early-season momentum in their IPL clash here on Tuesday.

Pandya, a key figure in the side, missed MI's previous outing due to illness, and his absence proved crucial in their six-wicket defeat to Delhi Capitals on Saturday.

While India T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav stepped in to lead and ensured continuity, MI missed Pandya's all-round abilities on a tacky surface.

His absence also forced a rejig in the combination. Deepak Chahar, drafted in for the game, delivered a tidy spell, but the decision to bring in pace all-rounder Corbin Bosch in place of seasoned left-arm pacer Trent Boult backfired, with the South African leaking runs.

Pandya has since travelled with the squad and returned to the nets, offering hope of a comeback as MI look to recalibrate their approach after the loss.

All-rounder Shardul Thakur, who starred with the ball in their opening game, was expensive in the last outing.

On the other hand, the ever-reliable Jasprit Bumrah has been economical but is yet to open his account this season.

POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	NR	Pts	NRR
Punjab Kings	3	2	0	1	5	0.637
Royal Challengers	2	2	0	0	4	2.501
Rajasthan Royals	2	2	0	0	4	2.233
Delhi Capitals	2	2	0	0	4	1.170
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	0	2	0.275
Mumbai Indians	2	1	1	0	2	-0.206
Lucknow Super Giants	2	1	1	0	2	-0.542
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	0	2	1	1	-1.964
Gujarat Titans	2	0	2	0	0	-0.424
Chennai Super Kings	3	0	3	0	0	-2.517

Miss your mark, lose the plot

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

Tim David was at his belligerent best during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's 43-run win over Chennai Super Kings at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. DH PHOTO/ BK JANARDHAN

R Vinay Kumar

If it is in the arc, it goes out of the park" is an adage that never goes out of fashion in T20 cricket.

On Sunday night, at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here, the ball travelled to all parts, even if it was not in Tim David's arc as the Royal Challengers Bengaluru faithful were treated to one of the most ferocious six-hitting parties the city has seen since Chris Gayle and AB de Villiers' departures.

Chennai Super Kings imploded under pressure as David went ballistic, smashing an unbeaten 70 off 25 balls, striking at 280.

The RCB middle-order bat clobbered eight towering sixes with one of them covering a distance of 106 metres and landing outside the stadium.

It is during these helpless situations that a bowler's mind does not know how to slow down a batter. Stopping the run flow would seem like a mission impossible, but that is where the trick is.

"When these kinds (97 runs in five overs) of things happen, you need to slow down the game," former India and Royal Challengers Bengaluru pacer Vinay Kumar tells *DH*.

"If you give yourself some time, you get to think about the options you have. Cricket is all about handling pressure. No matter how talented or skillful you are, it is about making the right decisions," he adds.

When we talk about outrageous six-hitting, we talk about positions that the batters get into. And David's big build, long levers and a strong base helps him get under the ball and generate the required bat swing and speed.

Even if the bowler is marginally off target, David maximises on the opportunity and smashes it over the fence.

"Basically for David kind of batters, who have the reach, if you try to bowl wide yorkers and miss, they can hit. They (CSK) just bowled pace on and did use slower ones and did not try to bowl under his feet."

Vinay also believes that the best way to go about business on surfaces that are flat is to back one's strengths while staying level-headed.

"As a bowler, you need to accept that Chinnaswamy is a high-scoring venue. And there will be many things running in a bowler's mind when bowling at the death or to hard-hitting batters. But it is very important to stick to one's strength."

While the carnage at times is inevitable, the key to limit the damage is to try and pick wickets before the batter gets his eye in. "As soon as the batter comes to bat, the best time to get them out is the first three to four balls."

Vinay also feels that it is essential to have variety in your bag to outsmart any batter.

While the batters have become more flexible and adaptable to conditions, cramping them for room is still a vital option.

"Especially when you are under pressure, you don't think about many options. You try one or two balls and look to finish the over.

"If you are having the plan of bowling wide of the stumps and if you miss by a bit, still they can connect. So the better option is to cramp them. If you sense that they are going hard early, then you can always slow it down. Even if you are trying to bowl wide, it has to be slow."

While the bowler is under pressure, the batter at the other end is also under pressure. And maybe that is why the death overs phase is the survival of the most composed.

Jamieson hoping for game time

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Kyle Jamieson. DC MEDIA

Kyle Jamieson has most of the tools to be a successful bowler across formats, especially T20s. Tipping the scales at 6'8" with a release point of over 8 feet, the New Zealander can constantly deliver balls that'll come at an awkward height for most batters.

At the same time, he's got a potent fuller ball. And, despite being a natural hit-the-deck type of pacer due to his giant frame, he can move the ball around judiciously when conditions permit. In short, he's what every captain would want in their playing XI. Sadly, things haven't gone the 31-year-old's way with constant injuries and subsequent inconsistencies in performances not allowing him to reach his full potential for New Zealand.

The struggles have continued in the IPL too for the Auckland resident. After a modest 2021 season with the Royal Challengers Bengaluru , where he bagged 9 wickets from as many games, he went missing before returning last season for the Punjab Kings, for whom he took 5 wickets in 4 matches.

As fate would have it, Punjab didn't retain him, but Delhi Capitals procured him at the auction last year for a base price of Rs 2 crore. The problem, though, is he's not a sure starter with the franchise blessed with riches in the fast-bowling department on both international and domestic counts.

Now, Jamieson is back to square one, where he first has to hope and pray for a game. And even if he gets one, the pressure to perform will be very high since he's competing with the in-form Lungi Ngidi and Mitchell Starc, as and when he joins the team, for a spot.

Jamieson, in a media interaction on Monday, said sometimes just being part of a set-up is beneficial to a cricketer. "Honestly, not that challenging. Obviously, everyone here, from one to the 20-odd players in the squad, wants to play and contribute to winning games.

"But you're also aware that only four overseas players can play. There's quality from one through to 20. For me personally, there's no better place to get better as a cricketer than the IPL. It's not like you need to play to benefit.

"There are still ways of contributing through training, meetings and helping around the group. For me, it's just the best place to grow your game, whether that's on the field or off it. I want to play, absolutely, but I know there's still a lot to gain just by being in this environment."

Following several battles with injuries, Jamieson said he's finally feeling fit for a considerable period of time. "Yeah, body is good. I've had 15–16 months uninterrupted now, where I've played pretty much everything. So the body is in a good place. Obviously, there was a bit of a niggly run with a couple of injuries, but I managed to find the root cause of those and fix that up.

"So I'm in a really good place now. It's nice to be here and to be involved, and I'm looking forward to the next couple of months with this team."

Jamieson, who spoke on a wide range of topics, praised Axar Patel's captaincy skills. "He's been really good. From my experience, he's done a great job. He juggles the bowlers well and keeps things simple. He doesn't mind having a laugh, which is important given the pressure and noise around T20 cricket and the IPL.

"Keeping things simple, fun and enjoyable is a real strength. The boys feel like they're in a really good place, and that's down to his captaincy. He's done a great job so far."

Ashwin reveals his final CSK stint left mental scars

CHENNAI, PTI: Former India off-spinner R Ashwin has revealed that he could have played the IPL a bit longer had it not been for a "mentally disturbing" and "painful" phase that he went through during his time with the Chennai Super Kings.

On his YouTube show 'Ash Ki Baat', the veteran, who retired from international cricket in 2024 before ending his IPL run last year, said he decided to call it quits to save the franchise the dilemma of deciding his fate.

"...I recently spent a disappointing season with CSK. It was a disappointing season for me personally. Honestly, in my mind, I could have played more, but I quit because emotionally, I just did not have the bandwidth to play while managing everything else," Ashwin said.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

IPL: RR vs MI **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHostar**.

FOOTBALL

Champions League: Real Madrid vs Bayern Munich, Sporting CP vs Arsenal **(12:30 am, Wednesday)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network, SonyLIV**.

IFL: Rajasthan United FC vs Gokulam Kerala **(4 pm)**, Dempo vs Shillong Lajong **(6:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 5, SonyLIV.**

ISL: Chennaiyin FC vs Inter Kashi **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **FanCode**.

TENNIS

Monte Carlo Masters: Round of 32 **(1:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

'Time for change': KSCA sets the ball rolling for overhaul of Chinnaswamy

MADHU JAWALI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The KSCA has kicked off the process to increase M Chinnaswamy Stadium's capacity by issuing an Expression of Interest advertisement. DH PHOTO

A few days ago, Karnataka State Cricket Association officials, led by president Venkatesh Prasad, met Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar to propose an expansion plan for the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. The aim is to increase the venue's capacity, which currently stands at around 34,000 spectators.

On Sunday, the KSCA set the renovation process in motion by issuing an Expression of Interest advertisement. The scope of work includes architectural and structural design, fan experience enhancement, crowd flow planning, and parking and traffic management, among other aspects.

While Prasad did not confirm a timeline for completion, he expressed hope that the project would be carried out during his tenure.

"We haven't set a timeline for completing the renovation because it's a lengthy process," Prasad told *DH*. "We have to invite bids and hold multiple meetings to secure various approvals. It will take considerable time. But we are determined to transform the stadium, hopefully during my tenure."

Prasad added that the plan is not a recent development but something he has been considering for years.

"It's not that I've come into office now and want to make changes immediately," he emphasised. "I've been thinking about this for the last 10 years. Even when I was pursuing my MBA in International Sports Management, I kept coming back to one thing -- the spectators. They are our biggest stakeholders, yet they have little say. The game is what it is because of them, and the least we can do is provide the best possible match experience at the stadium.

"The stadium is, of course, quite old. With due respect to those who built it, it needs to evolve. It was constructed in the 1970s with perhaps a vision for the next 50 years. But Bengaluru has grown beyond anyone's imagination, so everything must evolve accordingly.

"Other legacy stadiums like Wankhede in Mumbai, Eden Gardens in Kolkata, and MA Chidambaram in Chennai have undergone major renovations. It's high time Chinnaswamy did too.

"So many facilities at the stadium look temporary and inadequate at the moment. Commentators' boxes, spectator amenities... All that needs to change, and that's the only constant."

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